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**TWO HANDS ON THE SWORD  
A STUDY OF POLITICAL — MILITARY RELATIONS IN  
NATIONAL SECURITY POLICY**

BY

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## **Two Hands On The Sword**

### **A Study of Political – Military Relations in National Security Policy**

by

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Those who wield a sword in the service of the State must have a keen appreciation for the political and social context in which force is applied domestically and externally. This mandates their interactive involvement in policy matters involving the use of the military instrument.

Frank Hoffman in *Decisive Force: The New American Way of War*

To bring a war, or one of its campaigns, to a successful close requires a thorough grasp of national policy. On that level strategy and policy coalesce: the commander-in-chief is simultaneously a statesman.

Carl von Clausewitz in *On War*

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## Executive Summary

This paper examines US civil-military relations in order to ascertain the role that senior military leaders should play in assisting civilians to formulate national security policy. What is the military's role in the policy process, has it changed over time, and is it effective? Is the current civil-military relationship functional and durable enough to meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century?

We explore these underlying questions for a variety of reasons. First, civilian control over the US military quite appropriately makes civilian leaders—not admirals or generals—responsible for security policy. Yet, if sensible policy truly is the “art of the possible,” then providing civilian leaders with sound military advice is the first step to the prudent use of military forces to achieve political objectives. Simply stated, the level and quality of military advice proffered has enormous consequences.

Second, the emergence of new security threats in the post-Cold War era has resulted in the frequent, non-traditional employment of the US military around the globe. This has increased interest in whether civilian leaders adequately receive and evaluate military advice before opting to send forces in harm's way. In fact, the American public is unforgiving when it comes to military failure and high casualties. Politics alone makes it imprudent for civilian leaders to be perceived as formulating security policy in isolation from those who are likely to be charged with carrying it out.

Finally, the declining number of elected officials with previous military experience makes maintaining healthy civil-military relations an increasingly important concern. Previously, the high number of veterans serving in senior civilian leadership positions allowed Americans to largely take this interaction for granted. This is no longer true.

Our thesis is that, when formulating national security policy involving the use of force—both deciding to use force as an instrument of power, and tailoring military means to achieve diplomatic objectives—senior civilian and military leaders should engage in what we call *constructive collaboration*. Civilian leaders alone ultimately select and approve a specific

strategy to become national policy. Nevertheless, it is in the nation's best interest for senior military officers to be partners with civilian policy makers during policy formulation.

After extensive research that included more than twenty-five interviews with senior civilian and military leaders, our study revealed the following conclusions:

- Civil-military tension is as old as the Republic itself.
- This tension can and does serve positive purposes more often than it does negative purposes (although the latter are more publicized).
- Tension between the key civilian and military players can promote inclusive participation, diversity of opinion, and thoroughness in considering policy options. However, collaboration is messy and time-consuming.
- Tension makes civil-military relations a static dynamic as opposed to an equilibrium. This dynamic is influenced by both personality and institutions—injecting human factors and bureaucratic processes into the equation. Both are more about influence than power.
- The quality of military advice has improved dramatically because of major reforms in professional military education (PME) that resulted from the 1986 Goldwater-Nichols Defense Reorganization Act. The same is not true of many other government agencies outside the Department of Defense.
- Within the executive branch, imbalances in training and education, coupled with major disparities in resources, frequently prompts policymakers to “default to the military option.”
- This practice obscures the utility of the other elements of national power that may be more appropriate in addressing a particular security problem and results in excessive operating tempo for the services.
- Specific reforms are necessary both to strengthen civilian control and to ensure that balanced interaction occurs between the principal players.

Although our paper makes recommendations for improving civil-military relations, we do not prescribe a specific solution to the challenges we discuss. This is intentional. No recipe, formula, or legislation can completely remove ambiguity from such a complex task. Accordingly, readers searching for a definitive answer are forewarned: our modest goal is to shed new insight on a timeless problem in hopes of making future leaders—civilian and military—more aware of the pitfalls they face in securing our nation’s defense.

## Part I. Introduction

... the man who has risen to the top finds himself with new concerns, political and diplomatic. He is not simply directing the Army or Navy or Air Force. He is consulting with his colleagues and advising his civilian superiors, the Secretary of Defense and the President...He is advising them on matters having to do with the goals and ends of peace and of war. For this he has certainly not been trained...

Bernard Brodie *War and Politics*, 1973

The military did not like civilian interference "inside" their own affairs. They preferred to be given a limited and clearly defined mission from their civilian colleagues and then decide on their own how to carry it out. In recent years, the military had adopted a potentially potent term for assignments they felt were too broad: "mission creep." This was a powerful pejorative, conjuring up images of quagmires. But, it was never clearly defined, only invoked and always in a negative sense, used only to kill someone else's proposal.

Richard Holbrooke *To End A War*, 1998

### WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

In 1973, Bernard Brodie, a prominent civilian strategist of the 60s and 70s, castigated senior military officers for failing to provide civilian leaders with credible strategic advice. Brodie based his criticism primarily on observations from two major crises during the previous decade and a half. Both cases convinced him civil-military relations in America were broken.

The first case was the 1962 Cuban missile crisis, during which senior Kennedy Administration officials were severely disappointed with the recommendations they received from the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS). Specifically, Air Force General Curtis Lemay argued that a naval blockade would prove ineffective and a preemptive air strike against Soviet missiles in Cuba was necessary.<sup>1</sup> As Brodie observed:

Lemay may well have been right, but on no basis of special knowledge or insight that the President could not fully share. We notice in this critical instance not only the disposition to use maximum force at the outset, despite the existence of milder methods that did not exclude the more forceful ones later if they should prove necessary (and with nothing lost in the wait), but also the equally common tendency among the military to give without hesitation assurances that are well beyond their qualifications and knowledge.<sup>2</sup>

Matching General Lemay's lack of cognizance of the political impact of aerial bombing on US-Soviet relations was the intransigence of Admiral Anderson, the Chief of Naval Operations, over the prosecution of the naval blockade. Anderson refused to answer Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara's questions about ship maneuvers and blockade tactics.<sup>3</sup> The Admiral's contemptuous and insubordinate manner toward the Secretary of the Defense cost him his job, and it convinced many Kennedy Administration officials that the military not only disliked close scrutiny and operational oversight, but required it more than ever before.

The second crisis that influenced Brodie's view of civil-military relations was the Vietnam War. His research disclosed that throughout the conflict military advisors mistakenly reported or intentionally distorted events in favor of optimistic outcomes that were seldom justified by events in Southeast Asia and were substantively inaccurate.<sup>4</sup> Essentially, the JCS failed to provide civilian leaders with their best advice.<sup>5</sup>

Although these two crises could not be more dissimilar in nature (a brief confrontation at the brink of war between two nuclear superpowers and a protracted counterinsurgency in Southeast Asia), a common civil-military theme resonated in each. Specifically, military advice was neither adequate nor compelling. In the Cuban missile crisis, civilian leaders sincerely solicited military input but found it lacking in both scope and depth of analysis. In Vietnam, civilian leaders were not interested in hearing the military propose strategic alternatives to the adopted policy of "gradual response," and so placed a greater value on military acquiescence than military insights.

More recent events in Somalia highlight the critical importance civil-military relations continue to play in national security. After 19 soldiers died in a Mogadishu firefight as a consequence of questionable policy, Secretary of Defense Les Aspin resigned. His departure

was less about his failure to provide additional armor assets to the local commander than it was the public's perception that he had allowed civil-military relations to erode to an unacceptable level.<sup>6</sup>

The events of Somalia caused a new term to be added to the national security lexicon – “mission creep.” This became the trump card played by military leaders to force a reconciliation of political ends with military means. The term may have been new, but the condition it described was not. Indeed, the military experience in Vietnam formed the basis for military objections. The military increasingly insisted that civilian policy makers provide clear objectives, end states, exit strategies, and missions that could be accomplished with the military instrument while also addressing alternatives and collateral effects. In essence, the military were driving policy to meet their own conditions in an effort to avoid a recurrence of the protracted and unfocused experience of Vietnam. The controversy associated with the signing of the Dayton Accords for peace in Bosnia – Herzegovina illustrates the modern political-military situation. This is evident in Special Envoy Richard Holbrooke's criticism of the military's reluctance to support aggressive aerial bombing prior to the signing of the Accords. He charges specific admirals and generals with intruding into the policy arena, indeed, for operating outside their proper domain.<sup>7</sup>

This is a dramatic juxtaposition. Brodie ardently believed senior military leaders were ill-equipped to provide sound military advice, much less advice in other domains of security policy. Holbrooke, who is more comfortable with educated, aggressive officers who confine their advice to the pragmatic dimensions of using military force, seems to suggest that not only can senior military officers provide sound advice, they are doing so to an inappropriate extent by addressing larger policy issues. Brodie lamented military bellicosity. Twenty years later, Holbrooke complains about timidity and risk aversion. How did this happen? What would account for the differences between the landscapes they surveyed? Have military leaders wrested control from civilian policy makers?

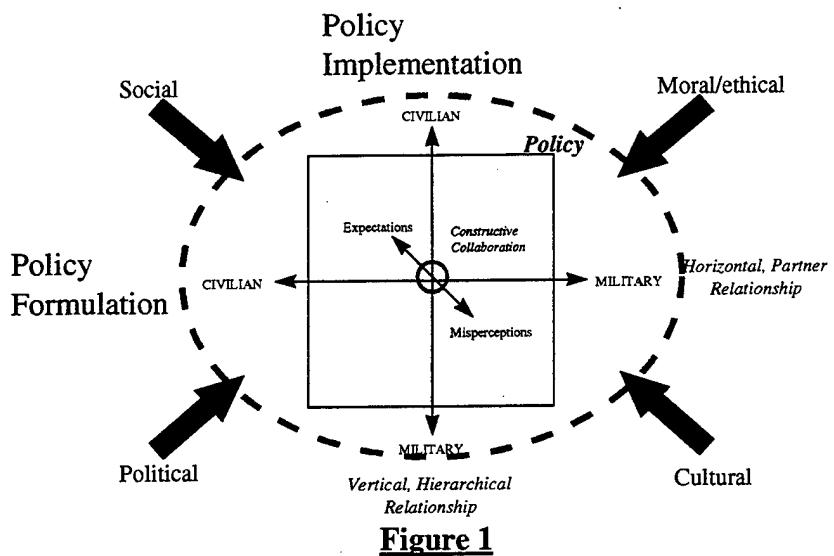
## **CONSTRUCTIVE COLLABORATION**

Civilian control over the military is an established and enduring American principle. It is complemented by widespread recognition that the US armed forces exist to protect and defend

US interests, however those interests are defined. Less clear is the military role in helping civilian leaders formulate national security policy. Few Americans appreciate how dramatically the quality of military advice—and the willingness of civilian leaders to hear and accept such advice—have changed over time.

Our thesis is that, when formulating national security policy involving the use of force—both deciding to use force as an instrument of power, and tailoring military means to achieve diplomatic objectives—senior civilian and military leaders should engage in what we call *constructive collaboration*. Under the American system of government, civilian leaders alone ultimately select and approve a specific national policy. Nevertheless, it is in the nation's best interests for senior military officers to be partners with civilian policy makers during policy formulation, which continues until a policy decision is made by the National Command Authority, that is, the President and the Secretary of Defense alone.<sup>8</sup> From that point, the relationship exists primarily within the traditional hierarchy of civilian policy decisions being implemented by military leaders and commanders.

Figure 1 illustrates our model of constructive collaboration in the political-military relationship.



The model shows policy formulation and policy implementation existing perpendicular to one another. Expectations and misperceptions pull the participants away from one another and impede their ability to cooperate in the same dimension. External forces such as social, political,

cultural, and moral-ethical pressures constrain the relationship in both dimensions of the national security arena. A “functional” political-military relationship, one that is the most likely to produce sound national security policy, contends inside or near the small center circle where the two lines intersect. This is where constructive collaboration exists, even among the tensions in the relationship. This range of “normal, or functional, tension” occurs not because civil-military relations reach a static equilibrium. Rather, it is a turbulent dynamic that operates in the range of “normal or functional tension” because the military is inside the circle as a highly competent partner and not outside the circle as a disconnected and independent external force. Similarly, the civilian leaders are familiar with the use of force to achieve national goals in conjunction with other elements of national power, all of which are introduced to balance or enhance military proposals. In other words, constructive collaboration overcomes many negative effects in political-military relations, and it creates conditions that support sound policy formulation and implementation.

While *constructive collaboration* does not preordain success, it does ensure policy formulation is inclusive rather than exclusive. The chances of success increase dramatically when the participants are both competent and well prepared, since constructive collaboration produces well-founded policy through the dominance of intellectual diversity over bureaucratic myopia. From a pragmatic point of view, constructive collaboration has the additional advantage of achieving early “buy-in” from key players. First, the military, who will ultimately determine the outcome of security policy based on how successfully they execute the orders they are given by civilian leaders, have equity shares in the policy. Second, civilian bureaucrats, having had determinative input into a plan for action, are reassured that control remains squarely in the hands of American civilian leaders.

Constructive collaboration doesn’t just happen. It must be developed, as must the participants who will engage in it. We contend that the current clamor regarding too much military influence or too little civilian control stems from inadequately appreciating the dynamics involved in the process, and from an imbalance in the degree of preparation of the participants. The truth is, Americans can expect to have sound national security policy only when there are two hands—political and military—on the nation’s sword. Unfortunately, the US national security apparatus remains highly compartmented and actually discourages constructive collaboration. We will explain why this is so and what must be done to cause a change.

The remainder of our paper consists of four parts. Part II explores the major theoretical underpinnings behind political-military relations, because familiarity with the past is indispensable to understanding the present and shaping the future. In Part III we examine how these theories have played out in modern history. This is where we illustrate for the reader those wide variations or fluctuations in influence within the political-military relationship in juxtaposition to our model. We also identify in Part III the moments that define the state of political-military relations. In Part IV, we present key findings from more than 25 personal interviews of past and present practitioners to show the reader why we believe constructive collaboration is the correct paradigm for political-military relations as we move into the next century. Finally, we synthesize our research into conclusions in Part V.

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#### ***Part I endnotes***

<sup>1</sup> Bernard Brodie, *War and Politics*, (New York: MacMillan, 1973), pp. 486-487.

<sup>2</sup> Brodie, p. 487.

<sup>3</sup> Lloyd J. Matthews, *The Political-Military Rivalry for Operational Control in the U.S. Military Actions: A Soldier's Perspective*, (US Army War College, 1998), pp. 23-25.

<sup>4</sup> Brodie, pp. 194-195.

<sup>5</sup> H.R. McMaster in *Dereliction of Duty* summarizes the reasons as follows:

“Unable to develop a strategic alternative to graduated pressure, the Chiefs became fixated on means by which the war could be conducted and pressed for an escalation of the war by degrees...In so doing, they gave tacit approval to graduated pressure during the critical period in which the President escalated the war. They did not recommend the total force they believed would ultimately be required in Vietnam and accepted a strategy they knew would lead to a large but inadequate commitment of troops for an extended period of time, with little hope for success.”

<sup>6</sup> Mark Bowden, *Black Hawk Down: A Story of Modern War*, (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1999), pp. 339-341.

<sup>7</sup> Richard Holbrooke, *To End A War*, (New York: Random House, 1998), p.118.

<sup>8</sup> The title “National Command Authority” refers to the President and the Secretary of Defense.

## **Part II. The Journey toward Truth**

The challenge of determining what the relationship of political and military leaders should be when formulating and implementing national security policy that involves the use of force is eased by examining how these roles have evolved through time. The perspectives brought into the decision-making arena drive the behaviors of each participant during policy formulation and implementation alike. Relations in the modern era are influenced by the theories and rules of past eras, at least to the extent that they are studied, understood, and applied by participants in the process. We examine some of the key theories and the rules that govern the relationship in America, recognizing fully that some of the threads forming the fabric of civil-military relations will be omitted. Nevertheless, the shape and nature of this fabric should be apparent.

### **THE THEORIES**

Military and social theorists have long argued about the nature of military force and its relationship to the nation state that applies it. The classical theorists Sun Tzu, Machiavelli, and Clausewitz provide theories that were conceived in very different times than those of modern America. Yet their application continues to be relevant even as we enter a new century. More modern theorists (writing after World War II) like Samuel Huntington, Morris Janowitz, Richard Betts, and Sam Sarkesian provide contemporary applications of classical theory to account for and to shape relations in the present. Each has a different approach. Each contributes to the body of knowledge while building on the works of his predecessors.

### **SUPREME EXCELLENCE (SUN TZU)**

One of the oldest theorists who continues to shape the thinking of generals and policy makers is Sun Tzu. His thirteen chapters, written sometime between 500 B.C. and 300 B.C., were compiled in *The Art of War*. Portions of the book have lost relevance, but some remarkably prescient advice remains for anyone who would consider using military force to compel an opponent.

First, his fundamental pronouncement: “The art of war is of vital importance to the state. It is a matter of life and death, a road either to safety or to ruin. Hence under no circumstances can it be neglected.”<sup>1</sup> This theme, both sage and simple, has reverberated through time and been repeated by many, even up to the present time.

Second, Sun Tzu warns his readers that in the relationship between the sovereign and the general, the sovereign can bring misfortune upon his army. This happens when the sovereign orders actions that cannot be performed, something Sun Tzu calls “hobbling the army.” It happens when there are attempts to make policies for administration of the army the same as those of the kingdom, without recognizing the essential differences between the two. And, finally, it happens when officers are employed indiscriminately, without regard to their capabilities.<sup>2</sup> There can be no doubt as to the appropriateness of this advice today (with the caveat that for our purposes, the term “sovereign” represents broadly the combined powers of the President and the Congress).

Finally, Sun Tzu has had a major impact on the theory of using force to compel one’s enemy.<sup>3</sup> This is particularly so in the thinking of modern military officers who have been exposed to his works for the entirety of their careers. He claims, “To fight and conquer in all your battles is not supreme excellence; supreme excellence consists in breaking the enemy’s resistance without fighting.”<sup>4</sup> This is arguably the key point upon which many civilian policy makers and military leaders appear to diverge in their approach. Those who do not ascribe to this premise see the pursuit of “supreme excellence” as a hesitation to use military force.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, those who do ascribe to the premise perceive that fighting, although acceptable at times, is never the best course of action. The changing nature of this dichotomy, particularly in terms of which position is advocated by whom, is fundamental to appreciating the current and future sources of tension within American political-military relations.

## **PROFESSIONAL ARMED FORCES AND THE NATION STATE (MACHIAVELLI)**

In a series of publications written at the turn of a century in which war and political institutions had evolved dramatically, Nicolo Machiavelli argued that warfare had changed forever. City-states evolving into nation-states had become dependent upon hired armies and had lost their identity in the process. Only a nation-state that closely connected the political and

military institutions could create an army (or armed forces) that would fight and die for their ruler or government.<sup>6</sup>

Machiavelli further believed that the task of defending the state was not solely the purview of a special, privileged group but rather a concern for all citizens of the same society. The life of the state depended upon the excellence of its army (armed forces), and that excellence depended upon how well the political institutions were organized to create conditions favorable to the military function. He envisioned a division of labor between the political and the military authorities, but he also saw a dire need for a unified involvement and effort. Machiavelli's thesis of shared, separate authority was revolutionary at the time, and yet it remains relevant despite the differences between the nascent nation-states of his era and the fully developed American nation of today. This tenet is taken for granted, essentially, in the contemporary political – military arena.

### **CONTINUATION OF POLICY BY OTHER MEANS (CLAUSEWITZ)**

We see, therefore, that war is not merely an act of policy but a true political instrument, a continuation of political intercourse, carried on with other means. What remains peculiar to war is simply the peculiar nature of its means.<sup>7</sup>

General Carl von Clausewitz *On War*

Perhaps the most significant theorist in the shaping of expectations is General Carl von Clausewitz. In his seminal work, *On War*, Clausewitz examines the nature of war and particularly its relationship to the state resorting to it. His assertion that war is an instrument of policy and that policy will always be the origin of war has become the foundational theory for anyone considering this subject. His translated words, quoted above, are his most famous and perhaps most over-applied pronouncement. But Clausewitz was very careful not to mistake the expanding use of force by nation-states to be an end unto itself. He makes this point clearly and energetically.

In Clausewitz's mind the political purpose that was the source of the war (or, for our purposes, the use of force) would naturally remain the supreme consideration in the war's conduct. In the theory Clausewitz propounded, the political nature of any war, and essentially any conflict in which a nation-state applied force, would have threads that extended into every aspect of the action. Furthermore, the political threads would have a continuous influence on all military operations conducted under the policy.<sup>8</sup> From this theory students of the use of force can have no doubt that policy reigns supreme over military operations. But that is often where the application of Clausewitzian theory ends for most.

What is often missed from Clausewitz is his requirement that the political aim be able to adapt to the nature of the means chosen to fulfill it. In other words, the trend and designs of policy had to be consistent with the use of force because means could not be considered in isolation from their purpose.<sup>9</sup> Clausewitz further asserts that when means and ends are not consistent, senior commanders should require a resolution to the inconsistency – a process that might well affect the political aims and cause them to be modified from their original conception, perhaps even radically so.<sup>10</sup>

This political–military collaboration, then, from a Clausewitzian point of view, is a necessary ingredient to successful prosecution of policies through the use of force. This is not the only point Clausewitz makes with regard to the relationship between the civilian or policy maker and the military or commander-in-chief. Significant to our examination, he provides advice on three different aspects of the issue that are elemental to seeing through the complexities of civil – military relations.

First, any true student of Clausewitzian theory will have absolutely no doubt as to the proper dominance of the political point of view over the military point of view (and any other point of view representing a singular aspect of the collective policy). He makes it clear that placing the political point of view subordinate to the military point of view is absurd. Policy is the guiding intelligence, and war (or the use of force) is the instrument. It cannot be otherwise. Therefore, the military is always subordinate to the political. Given this understanding, political and military interests will not be in competition with one another. If there is competition, the cause will be a lack of understanding.<sup>11</sup>

Second, viewing the use of force or the plan for using force as a “purely military” issue, or seeking “purely military” advice at the highest levels, is a fundamental mistake that is both unacceptable and potentially damaging to the government that takes such an approach.<sup>12</sup>

Finally, the efficacy of the policy in obtaining that which it was created to obtain is chiefly dependent upon the quality of the policy formulation. Clausewitz identifies two conditions that must be met to cause the relationship between the policy and the use of force to be correct.

One condition obliges the civilian to know the military. Clausewitz admonishes that those in charge of general policy vitally need a grasp of military affairs.<sup>13</sup> Stated differently—they must be familiar enough with the instrument to use it properly. We are reminded here of Sun Tzu’s admonition to sovereign powers to avoid “hobbling the army.” The other condition is the necessary involvement of the senior military commander in the policy formulation process. To Clausewitz, absent a combination of the sovereign and the senior commander in one person, the senior commander must be a member of the cabinet in order to take part in its councils and decisions.<sup>14</sup> In establishing this condition, Clausewitz echoes a view held by all the theorists discussed in this paper. That is, at the highest level of government, where the art of war and policy converge, the military commander-in-chief is at once both soldier and statesman.<sup>15</sup>

There is one final aspect of Clausewitz’s work to be highlighted here as a significant theoretical underpinning to the expectations of participants in national security policy formulation. Clausewitz calls it the “first, the supreme, the most far-reaching act of judgment that the statesman and commander have to make.” That is, determining what kind of war a nation is embarking on before they embark on it and “neither mistaking it for, nor trying to turn it into, something that is alien to its nature.”<sup>16</sup> This is the key to avoiding what has been termed “mission creep” since the early 1990’s. It is also the best means of avoiding disconnects between policy purposes and the means of pursuing them. Mutual understanding of this premise by statesmen and soldiers forms the foundation of collaborative opportunity. Failed understanding forms the basis of confrontation.

## THE SOLDIER AND THE STATE (MODERN THEORISTS)

### The Professional Warrior and Objective Control (Huntington)

Samuel P. Huntington's *The Soldier and the State* is the seminal work on civil-military relations in America. It is studied and applied by civilians and professional military officers alike. Some argue that the work is becoming dated, but many of Huntington's theories influenced the evolution of ideas on the subject since they first appeared in print in 1957 and continue to be relevant today.

To Huntington, the military service is a profession. Members adhere to a "higher calling" that makes it different from other occupations.<sup>17</sup> He ascribes three attributes to the profession of arms: expertise, responsibility, and a sense of corporateness. Although these characteristics are not unique to the military, they manifest themselves distinctively, and they are present in greater abundance, than one finds in most other occupations. He contends that this necessitates the separation of the military from the society it is sworn to defend.<sup>18</sup>

After tracing the historical backdrop to civil-military relations, Huntington notes that the Soviet threat after World War II prevented the US military from demobilizing. The requirement for a large, standing peacetime army challenged liberal ideology and fundamentally altered the way Americans view civilian control. In Huntington's view, these factors mandated that the US develop "...a system of civil-military relations which will maximize military security at the least sacrifice of other values."<sup>19</sup>

Huntington proposes that attaining equilibrium is the best way to do this—preserving the cherished ideal of civilian control while allowing for military excellence. He feared excessive "civilianization" would undermine the military's operational competence and erode the warrior ethos. On this point one scholar notes, "According to Huntington, inculcating liberal democratic values into the military, the essence of subjective control, is a dangerous idea because it causes the military to lose its military character and become impotent."<sup>20</sup> This also echoes the ideas of Sun Tzu.

Huntington's solution for keeping the military out of partisan politics was "objective control."<sup>21</sup> By this he meant providing the armed services sufficient institutional autonomy to practice military affairs in "splendid isolation."<sup>22</sup> Rather than trying to civilianize the military,

he considers the warrior ethos the best safeguard to ensuring the military remains politically neutral. This means maintaining a professional officer corps that is operationally competent and well educated so they understand (and willingly accept) that civilian leaders make the basic policy decisions. Conversely, civilian leaders are expected to seek the military's technical advice and minimize their own involvement in military issues.<sup>23</sup> This equilibrium serves as a firewall against both excessive civilianization and militarism.

Huntington believes civilian leadership should properly concern themselves with the "what" and "when" questions of using military force, while the military should rightfully focus on "how" to execute the civilian policy.<sup>24</sup> Nonetheless, how much objective control will guide political-military relations in the post Cold War era remains an unsettled question. Can we really conclude that the participants in the national security process – civilian and military – have embraced objective control as their institutional paradigm?

### **Soldier-Statesman and Subjective Control (Janowitz)**

Sociologist Morris Janowitz believes the answers are no. He argues that objective control alone cannot guide civil-military relations in the modern age. Unlike Huntington, he believes the divide between civilian and military leaders should be imperceptible or not exist at all. If war is an instrument of policy, then it is illogical to divorce military officers from the political objective they are using force to achieve. Accordingly, political-military (pol-mil) interaction is an asset, not a liability. Additionally, Janowitz contends the Defense Department's continued bureaucratic growth makes civilian-military interaction unavoidable. He further believes the military is a "special pressure group because of its immense resources, and because of its grave problems of national security." In his words, "The military have accumulated considerable power and that power protrudes into the political fabric of contemporary society. It could not be otherwise."<sup>25</sup>

Janowitz contends the inherent danger of the nuclear age does not decrease, but increases, the interdependence of civilian and military leaders. He writes:

The growth of the destructive power of warfare increases, rather than decreases, the political involvement and responsibilities of the military. The solutions to international relations become less and less attainable by use of force, and each strategic and tactical decision is not merely a matter of military administration, but an index of political intention and goals.<sup>26</sup>

Here, Janowitz is prescient in predicting the impact limited wars and complex contingencies have come to have on political-military relations. Similarly, his description of the traditional or “absolutist” officer needing to evolve into a “pragmatist” capable of coping with the increasing ambiguity of military operations short of war, has a currency that Huntington’s objective control theory lacks.<sup>27</sup>

In sum, Janowitz believes the most effective civilian control is subjective control over a nonpartisan military that is led by soldier-statesmen who grasp the political implications of force.<sup>28</sup> Whereas Huntington believes professional military behavior is self-regulating due to the warrior ethos, Janowitz believes close interaction with civilians keeps the armed forces in touch with American society and allows civilians to monitor military behavior closely.

### **A Moderate in an Unstable World (Betts)**

Professor Richard K. Betts of Columbia University thinks civil-military relations are the most strained when military advisors have too little—not too much—influence.<sup>29</sup> For Betts, the decisive factor is policy impact (a measure of influence), not resources or bureaucratic power. He writes, “military leaders become alienated from their administration superiors in direct proportion to the decline in their direct influence and their perception of the gap between their rightful and actual authority.”<sup>30</sup> He believes civil-military disagreements over the exercise of “rightful” authority almost always relate to the use of force.

Betts argues that military advisors (service chiefs in particular) are rarely non-political. There are many reasons for this, but, he believes politicization of the selection process is one of the most important factors. Generally, a given administration’s view of the military’s role dictates who it selects to be a service chief. As Betts notes,

If the military’s role is minimally political, the administration can afford to ignore considerations of political loyalty and make professionalism the only criterion in appointment. But, if the advisor’s role is highly political, the administration risks subverting itself if it does not screen prospective appointees politically.<sup>31</sup>

Using historical case studies to illustrate his point, Betts outlines three common methods used to select service chiefs: the routine-professional route, the professional-political route, and the exceptional-political route. The routine-professional route selects service chiefs almost

exclusively based on professional stature within a specific service. The professional-political route overlooks seniority and selects service chiefs whom civilian leaders have observed and deemed promising. The exceptional-political route involves picking leaders who are known—not just observed—to be astute, savvy, and politically compliant.

Betts has concerns because he finds the routine-professional route (model one) to be used most often. High professional stature with few political skills or ties often means poor rapport with civilian policymakers, low sensitivity to the political constraints facing those decision makers, and limitations on direct access to civilian decision makers. In short, this potentially translates into weak influence and spawns the alienation previously discussed.<sup>32</sup>

Betts argues that objective or subjective control alone cannot accurately define civil-military relations. He does not believe equilibrium is either desirable or achievable because civil-military relations remain in a state of constant flux. On this point he writes,

Both traditional administrative theory (objective control) and bureaucratic revisionism (subjective control) are stark ideal types of policy-making process; and reality can lie along the continuum between them...Neither extreme is realistic because government has inconsistent interests. There is an inevitable tension between expertise and political control; to enshrine one is to corrupt the other, and government needs some measure of both.<sup>33</sup>

For Betts, civil-military relations is a dynamic process that reflects the people and events at a given time.

### **Constructive Political Engagement (Sarkesian)**

Sam C. Sarkesian, Professor Emeritus of political science at Loyola University, moves beyond Betts and argues for a new kind of relationship. Sarkesian contends that uncontested civilian control over the military is precisely why it is permissible for the military to make its voice heard loudly in civilian councils.<sup>34</sup> He believes that there is no tradition of the military being silent with civilian leaders on matters of policy. He backs up his claim with positive and negative historical examples. In his judgment, Vietnam illustrates the negative consequences of senior military leaders not speaking up. His positive examples are Generals Ridgeway, Weyand, and Powell, who made their views known during the Korean War, Vietnam War, and post-Cold War eras, respectively. For Sarkesian, stifling debate and suppressing the search for truth under the rubric of military obedience is virtually unconscionable.<sup>35</sup> Here, his views contrast sharply

with those of his University of North Carolina colleague, Professor Richard Kohn. The latter argues the principle of civilian control trumps everything else—that civilian leaders have the right to fail (as they did in Vietnam) without fearing overt military resistance or disobedience.<sup>36</sup>

Sarkesian believes Vietnam would have been different had the military not remained silent and assumed a defensive posture with the Administration. Although a strong advocate of civilian control, he appears willing to relinquish some civilian control temporarily to avoid massive military casualties and national disaster. Accordingly, Sarkesian advocates “constructive political engagement” by the military. This means they participate actively in policy debates over the use of force. He believes being a participant legitimizes the military’s role in the national security process; delineates the boundary between defense policy and partisan politics; and provides the American public a clearer understanding of military life and culture.<sup>37</sup> Sarkesian embraces the pro-active position of his colleagues Douglas Johnson and Steven Metz, who write, “. . . [the] lifeblood of this equilibrium is constant adjustment shaped by open, informed debate from all segments of the national security community . . . it is time to ‘let a hundred schools of thought contend.’”<sup>38</sup>

According to Sarkesian, the military needs to become “politically savvy” so they can better understand and execute the policy decisions made by their civilian masters. He is quick to point out, however, that constructive political engagement does not mean the military involves itself in partisan politics or media campaigns for political purposes.<sup>39</sup>

Is this radical? Sarkesian thinks not, and he summarizes his position by writing:

It seems clear that the American military belongs to the American people and military professionals have the duty and obligation to insure that the people and its political leaders are counseled and alerted to the needs and necessities of military life. This cannot be done by adhering to a notion of the military profession as a silent order of monks isolated from the political realm.<sup>40</sup>

We believe that Sarkesian is on to something with his concept of constructive political engagement, in that he has articulated better than most the necessity for continuous interaction. We prefer “collaboration” to “political engagement” to emphasize the cooperative interaction of the best ideas, while clearly excluding involvement in partisan political activity and the confrontational aspects that may be byproducts of “engagement.” Getting to such a constructive

collaboration, however, may be dependent upon the bureaucratic relationships involved. A brief look at some applicable theories will help us frame these relationships further.

## **CONTEMPORARY BEHAVIORAL THEORY MODELS**

Contemporary business or management models are the offspring of bureaucratic theory best articulated by the German sociologist, Max Weber. His work, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, published in 1947, outlines why organizations were created and how leaders design and implement an incentive system they offer to their employees in exchange for positive personal behavior and productive activity. Weber's theory applies to both the private and public sector, and this makes most of his ideas applicable to the national security apparatus. Extrapolating this theory down to a more relevant level for the principals involved, some recent behavioral models try to explain and predict the interaction in the political - military arena. Two such models taken from the world of microeconomic theory are the Principal-Agent model<sup>41</sup> and the Issue Network.<sup>42</sup>

Within the framework of the Principal-Agent model, interviews with past and present practitioners conducted for this research point to a problem of "dual principals"—the Executive and Congress. Gibson's research notes the same problem, suggesting that the asymmetry of technical and operational expertise in the military against the strategy and policy expertise among senior civilian policy and decision-makers is problematic. However, the Principal-Agent model is intended to apply more to the hierarchical (and vertical) relationship of policy implementation than to the dynamic (and horizontal) relationship of policy formulation.

The Issue Network is a useful model that presumes like-minded individuals will form networks based on issues. This generally works if the like-mindedness focuses on the national security interests of the United States and captures the influence of stakeholders outside the national security apparatus reasonably well. It falls short when the principal civil-military participants are thrust into situations where they have no say in choosing whom their counterpart may be, or what the issue is. This theory also helps to explain the increased participation of the military in the policy formulation process. It recognizes but discounts the impact of personality and does not completely accommodate the divergent ambitions of the organizations that the principals represent. Both the Principal-Agent model and the Issue Network model fall short of

calling for a mandate we see as critical in this relationship—energetic and candid dialogue during policy formulation followed by unity of purpose in execution.

One unsurprising point arises in reviewing both of these models—this issue has been the topic of considerable study over a long period. Maintenance of this vital relationship, upon a cursory look, is too readily assumed “easy to do.” We found, through closer study, interviews, and experience, that this is clearly not an easy dynamic to manage.

## **ELEMENTS OF NATIONAL POWER**

Military force is an option available to any nation state with military means at its disposal. That, however, is just one element of a nation’s power. Time and experience reveal that in addition to military power other considerations include geographic power, the national will, political power, religious power, economic power (including industrial capacity), diplomatic power, and informational power. One could argue that there are others, and indeed there is some controversy as to what comprises “the elements of national power.” The theoretical construct, however, is accepted in both the political science and military strategic arenas. The application of this construct by the leaders in our national security apparatus is what merits discussion.

Using only one element of national power without integrating others is the work of amateurs. It probably does not matter who causes all the elements to be considered, but in recent times it is the uniformed military that has regularly insisted on consideration of elements other than military power. The interagency coordination process is designed to cause the varied elements to be exposed and integrated prior to a recommendation being proffered. The military’s advocacy for considering other elements of power would indicate that the process is working only to the extent that the varied elements are receiving exposure prior to a decision being made. But they are routinely exposed by the military first, and often after others who should have exposed them have failed to do so. That is cause for alarm. We believe the fundamental problem is a lack of recognition (or perhaps of application) of all the other elements, primarily on the part of the civilian leadership.

It is not our intent here to resolve the controversy into a distilled list of *The Elements of national power*, but rather to recognize that every nation has some or all of these elements

available by way of natural endowment or intentional cultivation. The wise nation is the one that uses them in concert to pursue a policy objective. At any given time not all elements will be useful or, perhaps more accurately, the nation may not be able to bring all of them to bear. Further, they are not always evident and are sometimes discovered by analysis after the fact of their influence. In American history this has generally been the case. “Better late than never” may be applicable, but what is most important is that once discovered and acknowledged, they must not fall out of relevance through sheer neglect.

Recognizing and intentionally integrating the elements of national power is more art than science. Study and practical application are essential; otherwise atrophy, both intellectual and procedural, will ensue. Frankly, our examination reveals that the military has been the principal proponent of an integration of the elements of national power in American policy since the end of World War I. At the conclusion of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that remains the case, and indeed the military is periodically criticized for asking “what about” types of questions in the national security arena. Who else asks? Worse yet, who else could ask? Every military officer from intermediate level on is conversant in the elements of national power and seeks evidence of their consideration in any strategic or operational plan they might confront. Nowhere else in the American National Security apparatus is such a recognition so thoroughly inculcated. Consequently, from nowhere else is there a consistent search for an integrated approach. But even in the military’s application the approach is often sequential, not truly integrated.

There is a widely held belief that military force should not be resorted to until diplomacy fails. Some have even gone as far as assigning peace as the responsibility of civilian policy makers and diplomats, and war as the province of the military alone. This parsimonious dichotomy contributed greatly to the notion that the military should have no peacetime function in policy making.<sup>43</sup> The “either – or” approach to the use of diplomatic power or military power is guided by many things, including international laws against aggression and Judeo-Christian ethics regarding just and unjust causes. The need for constraint is clear, but parsing the domains too cleanly contributes with certainty to poorly integrated policy.

Until the participants in the policy formulation process fully appreciate the need to apply all the elements of national power in relation to each other, an integrated relationship between

the participants themselves, and an integrated policy, will remain elusive. This, truly, should be cause for alarm.

This review of theory has attempted to familiarize the reader with the threads of continuity in the fabric of national security decision making. It is important to recognize that one thread is influenced by another, and not all threads are visible to the casual observer. Moreover, despite a common corpus of information, the depth of study and application have differed greatly between civilian policy makers and military leaders. To a degree, then, this section also has sought to provide a common prism through which both civilians and military may view the political-military relationships in the national security arena. Theory, however, is not the only delimiter of this partnership. In the United States there are laws, statutes, codes, policies, and directives that further define the relationship. They, too, are part of the fabric of expectations and behaviors that drive the wielding of the nation's sword, and they are worthy of review.

## **FRAMING THE RELATIONSHIP: A NATION OF RULES AND LAWS**

Every human social interaction, competition, or relationship has rules governing discourse and behavior. These rules are born of tradition and experience, both good and bad. The rules speak to what we value or hold inviolate. The same is true of the rules and norms that govern and guide the social contract between civilians and military persons in our democratic society.

The American social contract between military and civilians grew from, and remains governed by, a principle formed with the bedrock of our constitutional government. "We the People," in casting off the tyranny of the King of England, listed specific grievances against the crown's military presence among the continued pattern of oppression of our liberties and ability to self-govern. "He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the Consent of our legislatures . . . He has affected to render the military independent of and superior to the Civil Power."<sup>44</sup> This open mistrust of the purpose and authority of a standing army formed the essence of the control mechanism put in place by the Constitution that still exists today.

The Constitution calls for civilian control of the military on two levels. First, control comes indirectly by the will of the populace through their representatives in Congress. Congress has authority:

To declare War...;

To raise and support Armies, ...;

To provide and maintain a Navy;

To make Rules for the Government and Regulation of the land and naval Forces;

To provide for organizing, arming, and disciplining, the Militia, and for governing such Part of them as may be employed in the Service of the United States;<sup>45</sup>

The second level of civilian control comes directly by the designation of the elected President as the Commander-In-Chief of the Armed Forces.<sup>46</sup> This provides the direct chain of command so familiar to all. Additional rules strengthen the function of civilian control by limiting participation by military officers in certain influential seats of government seen as potentially destabilizing if held by officers. These restrictions continue today in forms modified to adapt to the complexities of modern government, but the principle of civilian preeminence is a centerpiece in this relationship for the life of this democracy, as we know it.

This element of civilian control is critical to understanding the debate over the proper function and role of the military in our society. With but one early exception, our history shows that the principle of civilian control of the military is emblazoned on the hearts of our officers and enlisted members—so much so, it is unquestioned even in the direst times of national crisis. We do not foresee this tradition changing, even in the uncertain post-Cold War world.

To accept powerful offices in public trust, military officers swear an oath to support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic. This is the same Constitution that the President swears to preserve, protect and defend when taking the oath of office as originally stated in Article II, Section 1 of the Constitution. Its essence is the same as the oath sworn by Representatives and Senators in Congress and by senior officials in the President's Cabinet. Its purpose is to place our highest loyalty to an ideal, above persons or position, for the good of the whole. It is a common bond in a relationship marked by competing factions.

The rich discourse in the Federalist papers serves to explain further the founders' conceptions of a system of governance of competing factions where "ambition was made to counteract ambition"<sup>47</sup> on a personal, ideological level. Considerable thought and debate focused on the proper function and purpose of America's military and its relationship to the populace.<sup>48</sup> Madison, in Federalist Paper #10, discussed the separation of powers to prevent their abuse. This discussion of the naturally competing positions advocated by the different branches of government is analogous to the relationship within the Executive branch between military and civilian positions as the elements of national power are synthesized into policy. The idea that differing perspectives should compete to produce the best outcome has endured two centuries of change and remains cogent today. And this is despite enormous changes in the size of the government, a standing military force, and the burdensome mechanics of military control. Balanced perspectives, not absolute control or power, remain the key to maintaining our democracy.

Power and authority of the military continue under the close watch of our nation's citizens and lawmakers. The laboriously detailed mechanics of a standing force have changed in response to changing global circumstances and the attendant need for standing forces. This codification of learned lessons and anticipated needs exists in numerous places. Its modern genesis is the National Security Act of 1947, which created a Department of Defense to manage the branches of the new post-war forces, and the National Security Council.<sup>49</sup> Civilian leaders approve and transmit tightly vested control of actual military operations through a complex set of rules of engagement, developed jointly. Title 10 of the U.S. Code for the DOD services (and Title 14 for the Coast Guard) carefully enumerate, and limit, the roles and responsibilities of the Armed Forces. What is clear in this mix of edicts is that the specific duties of the services and their leadership are set forth. Their interactions, however, are not.

The Goldwater-Nichols Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, born of lessons learned primarily in World War II and enlivened by an evident need for military reform in the 1980's, significantly influences the modern political-military interface. This act profoundly affected the real and perceived power of the professional military. Most notable to our work, it bolstered the role of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs to be the principal military advisor to the President (meeting Clausewitz's condition). It also created more opportunities for officers coming up through the ranks to experience the strategic civil-military interface.<sup>50</sup> While it clearly elevated

the Chairman, it retained the option of direct interface between the service chiefs and the President if the chiefs and the Chairman did not agree on an assessment or a recommendation. It also strengthened the authority of the unified commanders and codified in law the requirement for developing officers through professional education and assignment to Joint headquarters. We will address the consequences of this legislation in detail further into the paper.<sup>51</sup>

Civilian control of the military is not at risk. The rules intended to contain the military are intact and vibrant. Adequate checks and balances are in place, and the architecture of our governmental process is sufficient to the task of maintaining control. The subordination of military means to political ends also remains, but the political ends are more difficult to define in the post-Cold War world. The hard task ahead for those who will engage in national security policy making is achieving strategic creativity, a product of constructive collaboration. The true issue in political-military relations is really not a matter of control but one of influence. Why does it appear that the military has too much influence in formulating policy? Or, perhaps, why do the civilian policy makers appear not to have enough influence? With the rules intact, how did we end up here and what does our present condition portend for the future? There is much we can learn from our history that will help us here.

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#### *Part II endnotes*

<sup>1</sup> Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, Chapter I “Laying Plans,” edited by James Clavell (New York, 1983), p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Sun Tzu, p. 16.

<sup>3</sup> We must note here that even though the book was compiled somewhere between 500 BC and 300 BC it was not widely reviewed by western practitioners until it was translated into French in 1782. Remarkably, Sun Tzu’s words have endured the tests of time and culture.

<sup>4</sup> Sun Tzu, p. 15.

<sup>5</sup> Times have changed the positions commonly taken by civilians and military. In the last half of this decade, the roles have reversed from where they were in 1962, as illustrated by General Curtis LeMay’s advice to President Kennedy during the Cuban Missile Crisis that there were no options – military force had to be used. This stands in stark contrast with the confrontations between Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Colin Powell regarding the efficacy of using force, and the media’s labeling of generals as “reluctant warriors.”

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<sup>6</sup> Taken from Essay 1 "Machiavelli: The Renaissance of the Art of War" by Felix Gilbert in *Makers of Modern Strategy: from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, Part One "The Origins of Modern War", edited by Peter Paret (Princeton, 1986).

<sup>7</sup> Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, 1989), p. 87.

<sup>8</sup> Clausewitz, p. 87.

<sup>9</sup> Clausewitz, p. 87.

<sup>10</sup> Clausewitz, p. 87.

<sup>11</sup> Clausewitz, p. 607.

<sup>12</sup> Clausewitz, p. 607.

<sup>13</sup> Clausewitz, p. 608.

<sup>14</sup> Clausewitz, p. 608. Of particular importance is the clarification in translation made between the first and the second editions of Clausewitz's work as described in footnote 1 on page 608.

<sup>15</sup> Clausewitz, p. 111.

<sup>16</sup> Clausewitz, pp. 88-89.

<sup>17</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1957), p.8.

<sup>18</sup> Huntington, p.8.

<sup>19</sup> Huntington, p.2.

<sup>20</sup> Sam C. Sarkesian, John Allen Williams, and Fred B. Bryant, *Soldiers, Society, and National Security*, (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner, 1995), p.134.

<sup>21</sup> Huntington, p.83.

<sup>22</sup> Sarkesian, Williams, and Bryant, p.135.

<sup>23</sup> Huntington, pp. 83-85.

<sup>24</sup> Edward B. Westermann, "Contemporary Civil-Military Relations: Is The Republic In Danger?" *Airpower Journal*, Summer 1995, p.76.

<sup>25</sup> Morris Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait*, (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1960), p.VIII.

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<sup>26</sup> Janowitz, p.14.

<sup>27</sup> F.G. Hoffman, *Decisive Force: The New American Way of War*, (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1996), pp. 9-14.

<sup>28</sup> Hoffman, pp. 12-15.

<sup>29</sup> Richard K. Betts, *Soldiers, Statesmen, and Cold War Crises*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977), p. 21.

<sup>30</sup> Betts, pp.7-8.

<sup>31</sup> Betts, p.53.

<sup>32</sup> Betts, p.74.

<sup>33</sup> Betts, p.33, 51.

<sup>34</sup> Sam C. Sarkesian, "The U.S. Military Must Find Its Voice," *Orbis*, Summer 1998, p. 424.

<sup>35</sup> Sarkesian, *Orbis*, p. 425.

<sup>36</sup> Interview with Richard C. Kohn on 21 January 1999.

<sup>37</sup> Sarkesian, *Orbis*, pp. 423-424.

<sup>38</sup> Sarkesian, *Orbis*, p.433.

<sup>39</sup> Sarkesian, *Orbis*, p. 428.

<sup>40</sup> Sarkesian, *Orbis*, p. 426.

<sup>41</sup> The model is principally applied by Peter Feaver and Deborah Avant. See Peter Feaver, "Delegation, Monitoring, and Civilian Control of the Military: Agency Theory and American Civil-Military Relations." *Harvard Project on U.S. Post Cold War Civil-Military Relations. Working Paper # 4*, May 1996; and Deborah Avant, *Political Institutions and Military Change* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994).

<sup>42</sup> Taken from Christopher P. Gibson and Don M. Snider, "Explaining Post-Cold War Civil-Military Relations: A New Institutional Approach." *Harvard Project on U.S. Post-Cold War Civil-Military Relations. Working Paper # 8*, January 1997, p. 5.

<sup>43</sup> Amos Jordan, William J. Taylor, Jr., Lawrence Korb. *American National Security: Policy and Process*, 4<sup>th</sup> Ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), pp. 55-56.

<sup>44</sup> *Declaration of Independence*, 1776.

<sup>45</sup> *Constitution of the United States*. Article I, Section 8.

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<sup>46</sup> *Constitution of the United States*. Article II, Section 2.

<sup>47</sup> *Federalist Paper* #51.

<sup>48</sup> See *Federalist Papers* #8, 23-29, 47, 48 and 51.

<sup>49</sup> This sweeping legislation did far more than mentioned here, but these are the salient points for our discussion. Many of the other changes became important later, and their modification and implementation are codified in later laws and directives.

<sup>50</sup> Creating the J7 and J8 directorates and creating the position of Vice Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, did this. Also enabling was the growth of overall staff size and an assignment priority that filtered higher performers into the Joint Staff.

<sup>51</sup> Numerous articles appeared at the tenth anniversary of Goldwater-Nichols, some critical that it did not do enough, others critical that it had vested too much power in the Chairman as principal military advisor to the President. Wherever the authors landed on that spectrum, it was clear Goldwater-Nichols achieved what it requested. See Robert B Adolph Jr., Charles W. Stiles and Franklin D. Hitt, Jr., "Why Goldwater-Nichols Didn't Go Far Enough", *Joint Forces Quarterly*, Spring 1995, pp.48-53, James R. Locher III, "Taking Stock of Goldwater-Nichols", *Joint Forces Quarterly*, Autumn 1996, pp.10-16, and Colin L Powell, "The Chairman as Principal Military Advisor", an interview, *Joint Forces Quarterly*, Autumn 1996, pp.29-36.

## Part III. From the Crucible

“... war is not only too important to be left to the generals but too important and far too complex to be handled adequately by any one profession. And so far as concerns responsibility, the civilian leader who has the constitutional authority and obligation to control should have no fears or diffidence about his inherent competency, given suitable advisers, to do so.”<sup>1</sup>

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In the national security arena, the roles of key players are defined by statute and more often by the complex dynamics of position, perceptions, and personalities. Influence in the national security arena flows from the particular dynamics at a given time. Institutions interact with one another, forming patterns of behavior and cultures. Individuals transition through the institutions and change them internally. Individuals also interact outside the institutions, creating relationships that may supplant institutional roles. Before examining the changes in relative influence between the key players, both institutional and individual, a brief description of the evolution of their roles is useful.

### **EVOLVING ROLES**

#### **The President**

Historically, legally, and properly, the President is the locus of national security decision making. The degree of influence ascribed to the President is for the most part a matter of choice on the part of the President himself. Political pressures and constitutional “checks and balances” have a limiting effect on the President, but only in constraining the top end of the influence scale. The bottom end depends on the President’s decision-making style, and his preferences for the depth of involvement in national security and foreign policy matters. In selecting persons to fill key national security roles, the President establishes the groundwork for his own influence. Strong personalities are generally selected to act for the President in areas in which the President has less interest or expertise. Conversely, when “weaker,” or perhaps, less dominant personalities are selected, the President has a greater opportunity to exert personal influence in

policy formulation. It is important to recognize that the President, through his appointments of principal national security actors, not only builds his own influence base but also sets into motion the relative influence among the principals.

### **The Secretary of State**

Traditionally, the Secretary of State is the President's principal advisor on all foreign affairs, including national security. Prior to World War II this role was certain and was generally filled by professional diplomats. Since World War II the Secretary of State is more often than not a person of high intellect or established influence who generally comes from something other than a diplomatic background. In more than any other key national security position, the influence of the Secretary of State is subject to the prerogatives of the President. More and more frequently the Secretary of State is not the President's principal foreign affairs advisor. That role moves to other players (including the President), depending first on the President's appointments of the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, and the National Security Advisor, and then based on the personalities of the persons appointed to the positions when interacting with one another. The relative influence among these three Presidential appointees has a determinative effect on the rest of the national security apparatus.

The influence of the Secretary of State does not translate directly into the influence of the State Department. Frustrations with the State Department's own bureaucratic inertia and perceptions of a lack of responsiveness have led Presidents and Secretaries of State to bypass the department itself while pursuing individual initiatives in foreign policy.<sup>2</sup> The experience of the foreign service officers is often overshadowed by the "outsiders" from the academy, from the business arena, or from national security policy analysis groups (often referred to as "think tanks") who are placed into key positions in the department to "make things happen." These outsiders have relatively little foreign policy experience, little or no State Department experience, and, in recent years, no military service experience.<sup>3</sup> Rather, they are "brilliant amateurs,"<sup>4</sup> extraordinarily talented individuals who are not encumbered by bureaucracies and have intellectual abilities to address very complex issues, albeit without the benefit of directly relevant personal experience or extensive professional development. Such players have

profoundly impacted political-military relations in the national security policy arena, and we will address the impacts momentarily.

### **The Secretary of Defense**

With the National Security Act of 1947 and the creation of a “national military establishment” came a new cabinet-level position focused exclusively on national security and defense matters. The Secretary of Defense was to be the President’s principal assistant in national security matters, assisted by the secretaries of the three executive departments of the new military establishment and their military service chiefs. The position was insufficiently empowered to fulfill the roles conceived in the 1947 Act and, consequently, the Secretary of Defense became a weak coordinator without his own staff. The lack of a staff deprived the Secretary of the knowledge needed to exert power in coordinating policies or resolving differences among the departments, which retained their direct access to the President. Further, the Secretary as an individual could not possibly form a civil-military partnership with the corporate Joint Chiefs of Staff that would resemble the wartime partnership between Secretary of War Henry Stimson and Army Chief of Staff George Marshall. The Secretary of Defense position was strengthened considerably by a 1949 law amending the 1947 Act. The amendment transformed the National Military Establishment of 1947 into the Department of Defense, an executive-level department headed by the secretary and supported by an appropriate staff. Notably, the amendment also authorized a chairman for the Joint Chiefs of Staff who would not represent any single service, and doubled the staff size for the Joint Chiefs, to 210 officers. The Secretary of Defense was the primary beneficiary of this amendment, and the services lost considerable influence by being reduced from executive-level departments to a position subordinate to the Department of Defense. The service chiefs, by contrast, retained direct access to the President by virtue of their roles as members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Since 1949 the Secretary of Defense has increased in prominence in the national security arena. This is attributable to internal reorganizations intent on providing for greater control over all aspects of the military, including operations, commonly associated with but not limited to the McNamara years. More important to the increase in prominence, yet less examined, have been the dynamic shifts in influence within the Executive Branch among the Secretary of Defense, the

Secretary of State, the President's National Security Advisor, and the President, due to presidential emphasis and the role of personalities. Fifty years later, in 1999, the Secretary of Defense is codified in statute as being alone with the President in constituting the National Command Authority. One former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff described this unique role as the "Deputy to The Commander in Chief."<sup>5</sup> This is certainly supported in fact by the Secretary's position in the operational chain of command for the military between the President and the combatant commanders in chief. We should also note that, whereas the first Secretary of Defense had no staff and was thus deprived of both knowledge and influence, the current Secretary's staff is the "Office of the Secretary of Defense."<sup>6</sup> This apparatus has itself expanded in size and scope into domains not originally conceived in its creation. It now accords considerable knowledge and influence to the Secretary within the department itself and within the policy arena as well.

### **National Security Council and the Institutional Presidency**

The National Security Council (NSC) grew out of the American experience in World War II. The original National Security Council consisted of the President, the Vice President, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, and the director of the Office of Civil and Defense Mobilization<sup>7</sup> and was expected to operate as a counterpart to the British War Cabinet. The American progenitor for the NSC was the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee, an *ad hoc* body created during the war to facilitate interagency collaboration of wartime policy formulation between the military departments and the State Department. It was principally dominated by the influential Secretary of War Henry Stimson. The Council was responsible directly to the President, who served as its chair, with the Secretary of Defense designated as chair in the President's absence. This was an intentional design feature introduced by President Truman to ensure that policy formulation and decision authority rested with the President himself instead of being dominated by the Pentagon.<sup>8</sup> The NSC had formalized responsibilities but met on an *ad hoc* basis to corporately examine alternatives to security policy. The 1947 Act also authorized a small staff to support the NSC during meetings and between them.

Since the NSC was formed, it and its staff have experienced gradual change, leading to a common misperception in modern times that the National Security Council staff is the National

Security Council. In truth, the membership has not changed significantly in fifty years, retaining four statutory members, two statutory advisors (the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Director of Central Intelligence), and other advisors at the President's discretion. The staff, on the contrary, has changed considerably in scope, function, structure, utility, and ultimately in relative influence within the national security arena.

The NSC staff has been a small coordinating staff for some presidents and a large, operating headquarters for others. Its role has ranged from neutral recorder of proffered positions at one extreme to powerful advocate of certain positions at the other, including at times the intermediate role of facilitator of discussion and discourse. The President's decision-making approach forms the basic explanation for the variation in NSC staff influence. More accurately, the authority the President gives to his Assistant for National Security Affairs, commonly referred to as the National Security Advisor, determines the full scope of influence exerted by the NSC staff as well as that of the advisor himself.

The National Security Advisor, once a special assistant on the White House staff, is selected by the President to serve as a policy "wise man" without departmental constituencies and free from congressional oversight or constitutional limitation. He technically has only advisory influence. But, in the unique world of Washington, access is power, and the National Security Advisor's access is greater than that of any statutory member of the National Security Council proper. Again, this power is granted by the President and his decision-making approach, which is unpredictable in the future. What is clear and predictable is the correlation between the considerable influence exerted by National Security Advisors who possess the combination of a close relationship with the President and directive authority over a large NSC staff, and the diminution of influence by other key national security players. In such cases the Advisor to the President for National Security Affairs and the National Security Council Staff become, in essence, an institutional presidency that drives the national security apparatus for good or ill.

### The Uniformed Military

As with the preceding descriptions of participants in the political-military aspects of the national security arena, the uniformed military participates individually and institutionally. Individual participation broadly encompasses statutory roles of senior individuals, as well as

interdepartmental or interagency participation of staff officers. Constructive collaboration is essential in any of the individual interactions. But for our purposes, we will confine discussion of individual participation and influence to the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the combatant commanders-in-chief. Institutionally, the military departments interact in a political-military context within their own organizations, and also as corporate entities with other governmental departments and branches. This is particularly so with regard to political-military relations with the Congress in designing and supporting military policy. Within the national security policy arena, however, the primary institutional interfaces occur between the Joint Staff and the departments of the executive branch, especially the Department of Defense, the Department of State, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the institutional presidency.<sup>9</sup> We will focus our discussion of relative influence to the political-military interactions in the national security policy arena.

American history from the Revolutionary War until World War II reflects an absence of consolidated, professional advice from the military (meaning the Army and the Navy during that entire period) to political leaders. There was no lack of advice, to be sure, as many officers created and maintained direct channels of communications with cabinet members, legislators, even the President himself.<sup>10</sup> What was lacking was consolidated advice. Army and Navy positions were only accommodated by informal cooperation (with the sole exception of the collaborative efforts at developing coastal defenses). Truthfully, this lack was inconsequential until America began to project military power abroad for something other than freedom of navigation. World War I exposed the ill effects of poor military integration, but the global obligations of World War II made them acute.

Expanding on the existing Joint Army-Navy Board and mirroring the British Combined Chiefs of Staff, the US service chiefs formed the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS). President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Executive Order of 1939 gave the joint chiefs direct access to him on policy as well as operational matters. The presidential appointment of Admiral Leahy as chief of staff to the president provided a direct intercessor for the joint chiefs. But the early joint chiefs operated through the assignment of "executive agent" responsibility to one of the services, based on the region or type of action involved. Conflicts between the executive agent and the other services were generally resolved through compromise in an effort to achieve the required consensus.

Structurally, the 1947 National Security Act and its amendment in 1949, merely codified the processes and positions created during the war. This resolved the lack of consolidated advice, but the compromises increased rivalry among the services (including the new Air Force), and they caused the proffered advice to be the least common denominator. Procedurally, it legitimized the wartime level of military influence in the national security arena. The scope of influence would flag considerably, though, owing to two primary conditions: the fundamental weakness of a consensus-driven body, and the migration of a large accumulation of highly experienced military officers into all of the other parts of the national security apparatus.

The Goldwater-Nichols Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 has already been discussed in this paper. Here its relevance is the marking of the end of both conditions just described. Specifically, the Act released the JCS from the tyranny of consensus, permitting a competition of ideas to result in a position to be proffered by the JCS Chairman that might not represent a consensus view. The combatant commanders were reaffirmed in their authority, access, and influence in a way that nearly matches that of their predecessors in the 1940s. Also, a new pool of highly experienced, professional officers grew from the national and military retrospectives of Vietnam and the legislative energy applied to professional education of military officers in joint strategy and national security. These professional military officers are at every intersection of political and military functions in national security policy, particularly within the Joint Staff. The individual and institutional political-military relations reflect this enormous increase in professionalism. Moreover, these developments occurred against a backdrop of decreasing military and national security policy experience in the other parts of the national security apparatus. The consequence of the 1986 Act is a restoration of military influence to post-World War II levels, accompanied by a very different caste of officers to wield that influence.

### The Congress

In a constitutional context, the two hands on the nation's sword are the executive branch and the legislative branch of the US government. There is always tension between the two—sometimes functional—sometimes dysfunctional. With respect to national security policy the President generally commands greater influence, but the Congress, like the President, may legitimately choose to exert authority anywhere in the process. Congress is at once a unit of

government and the embodiment of “the people” of the United States, which, in light of Clausewitz’s paradoxical trinity, makes it responsible for the subordination of military force as an instrument of policy and for channeling the blind natural force of popular passion.

Historically, Congress shapes national security policy through its principal constitutional authority to appropriate resources for the instruments of policy. The resources include, as a simplified list, money, people, authority, structure, and materiel or equipment. Congress also shapes policy through political and legislative actions directed toward the executive branch (including those directed at the President), generally intended to counterbalance influence trends in the national security arena. Examples of this shaping include the ratification of treaties, the passing of resolutions constraining or releasing the use of certain elements of national power, and, ultimately, the constitutional authority to declare war. Finally, Congress shapes policy through purely political actions intended to sway policy in a direction that is favorable to members’ constituencies. This is ostensibly the action taken in direct response to the will of the people. Congress may exert itself in many more ways, given the broad authority it possesses under the Constitution, but when policy involves the use of force, Congress for most of its history has been acquiescent to the President’s constitutional prerogatives as commander in chief of the armed forces. The growing trend in recent history (from 1950 to the present) has involved much more congressional activism in challenging the President to justify the use of force in some cases and even encouraging the use of force in others.

The marked decline in military experience within the Congress, as in other areas of the government, has caused more, not less, involvement in national security policy and military policy as well. We consider this to be both good and bad. It is good in the sense that the dangerous acquiescence of the past to the executive branch and to the military leadership is less likely to recur. It is bad in that it requires military leaders to expend considerably more energy informing members of Congress on all aspects of military life, ranging from personnel services to strategy. This particular energy drain is one that most military generations in American history have not been required to experience, and the impacts show up in draining energy from other places where it still must be applied.

## National Security Policy Groups

National Security Policy Groups, better known as “Think Tanks,” are products of the expanded role of the US in global security and a growing interest in public debate of US policies. We do not assert that the policy groups act as one unified body influencing a particular policy in a particular way. Rather, our intent is to recognize the incontrovertible fact that US policies in general and national security policies in particular are not formed solely by the collaboration or even the competition of governmental organizations on their own. Policy groups, or think tanks (we will use the terms interchangeably), interact within the national security arena primarily as external forces, as our model depicts, interjecting points of view that represent some portion of the issue. Some also interact as internal forces who, in doing the analysis that the statutory participants cannot do because of the constraints of time, energy, or expertise, actually shape policy as the government’s proxy.

Think tanks are not a recent phenomenon. Indeed, as early as 1900, educational institutions and organizations founded by wealthy benefactors, such as Andrew Carnegie, not only existed but were also influencing public opinion on matters related to the actions of European states.<sup>11</sup> World War I was the first major catalyst for the growth in numbers of policy groups. The isolationists and the pacifists created organizations for advocacy of their causes. This approach was nothing new, but a new species emerged with the purpose of providing nonpartisan education and discussion by offering different views on major policy concerns, rather than simply furthering advocacy campaigns.

The end of World War II marked a second surge in the growth of policy groups. Stimulated by America’s newly found prominence as an international power (and the burdens that accompany it), the birth of nuclear weapons (and their burdens), and the clear and palpable threat of Soviet communism, the policy group industry burgeoned. Again, a new species emerged. The new thrust, particularly among antinuclear policy groups, was to attack policies made by consensus between political parties or government branches in an effort to dismantle the long-standing tradition that reserved government policy making to a small elite.<sup>12</sup> The strategic turbulence of the 1960s and 1970s, coupled with the growth of televised information, sustained the growth of policy groups and public interest in policy until the final surge in the 1980s, when the size and nature of the groups changed to its current state.

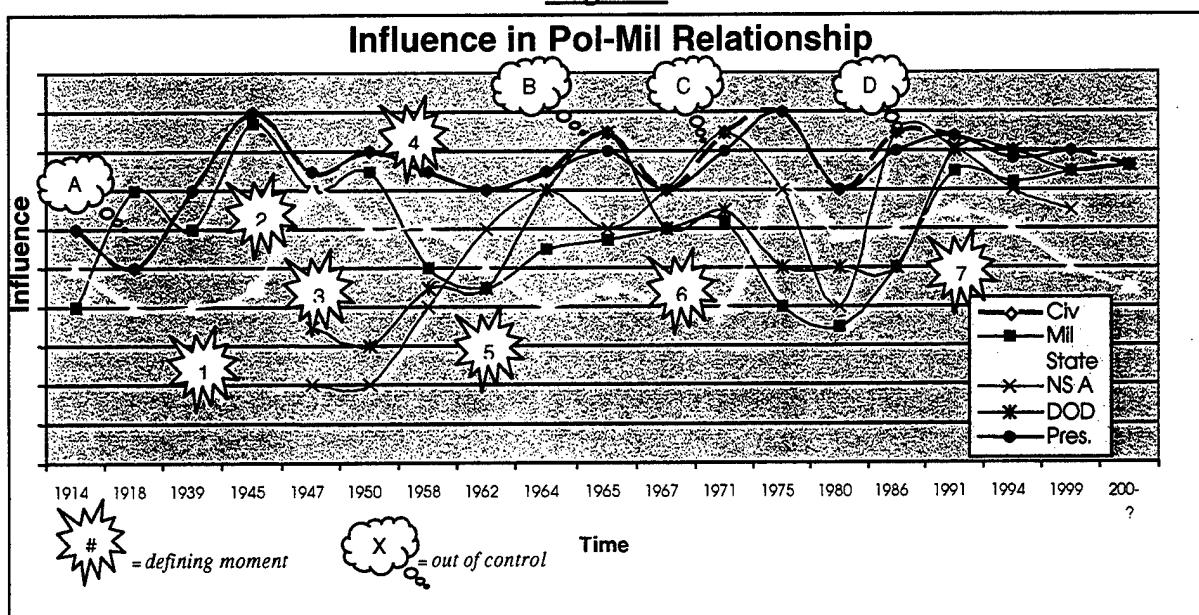
With the election of President Reagan came a new dimension for policy groups. Political advocacy backed by large amounts of money sought to educate the public in a way that would cause a particular group's candidate for political office to be elected. In this way, the policy groups would influence policy by having a representative of their constituency in a position to make policy inputs and decisions. The motivations and the perspectives seemed to be driven by the shift in power represented by a Republican President coupled with a Republican majority in the Senate.<sup>13</sup> Partisanship added to policy debate, and new technology brought issues into public view as they happened. The Gulf War of 1990-1991 seemed to crystallize all of these dynamics. The endless supply of national security experts from myriad policy groups (many of which share board members) appearing before the public or privately advising the decision-makers marked a new dimension. As the 20<sup>th</sup> century closes, America is left with an ever-expanding policy group industry, one that not only informs the public through the debate of policy, but also acts as a government surrogate in making policy proposals, takes political action through financial support, and serves as the "waiting room" for senior civilian officials who rotate in and out of statutory government service. Interestingly, the uniformed military has a regular presence in virtually all of the major academic and independent policy groups as a part of the professional education system. We do not challenge the usefulness of any of these various purposes. We do assert, though, that policy groups are probably a permanent appendage—at least well into the foreseeable future—of the national security apparatus that must be acknowledged.

## **RELATIVE INFLUENCE**

If one were to graphically portray the degree of influence or perhaps autonomy exercised over time by key players and institutions in the American national security arena, the resultant curves for civilian policy makers and senior military leaders would be different in every respect. The peaks and valleys of influence would appear at different times (not always antipodal), and the slopes between those peaks and valleys would have different grades. In short, they would be distinct historical paths.<sup>14</sup> At the same time, when one curve is superimposed on another, the points at which the two curves are most divergent represent circumstances in which the difference in influence is the greatest and collaboration is the least. The points where they intersect reveal the points where relative influence within the policy arena is the same for the players being compared, and collaboration is possible. When the curves converge on the way to

a sharp peak or valley, collaboration tends not to occur because a substitution of roles is generally occurring in its place. Finally, when the curves are close in their level of relative influence in the national security arena and their slopes are flat, constructive collaboration has a fertile field to take root and develop.

Figure 2<sup>15</sup>



Close examination reveals that something has to happen to change the slope of a particular curve enough to create a peak or a valley in relative influence. The relationship between the curves is the political-military relationship itself. In this section we will reveal what happened to change the curves, giving emphasis to the impact of opportunities taken or lost for constructive collaboration. We will call these opportunities *Defining Moments*, since they define the curves themselves.

What, then, were the key happenings to cause influence to shift between the players and institutions of the American national security arena, and how did the current status evolve? More importantly, judging by the trends initiated in the past, what does the future hold? We will review some of the defining moments to reveal the answers.

## DEFINING MOMENTS

The period immediately following World War I had considerable economic effects on the United States. There was no plan for demobilization in effect, war debts by Allies were written off, inflation rose above 100 percent, and the increased demand for basic needs could not justify the maintenance of a large military. Domestic conditions overshadowed military concerns as Congress slashed defense budgets and manpower. The United States witnessed the stillbirth of the League of Nations, an initiative intended to eliminate war as a means of discourse. With it came a turn toward isolationism and reduced involvement in foreign policy issues.

From 1920 to 1939, the military's influence on national policy was much reduced from its previous peak during World War I, owing heavily to the prevailing attitude that Clemenceau was correct—war was too important to be left to the generals. Popular attitudes turned away from the study of war toward economic and industrial concerns. Military education during this period, on the other hand, reached a level of prominence and professional quality that had never been attained before and that would not be attained again for some fifty years. Focusing on the lessons of World War I, and projecting them into new areas such as operational art, rise of technology in modern warfare, industrial mobilization, and contingency planning, the military created a very professional corps of officers who were prepared to exercise considerable influence by default in future wars.

### Defining Moment #1 – World War II

The Second World War of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and particularly the year 1942, marked a defining moment in political-military relations. At the time the three key players in the national security arena were the President, the State Department, and the War and Navy Departments (which we aggregate as “the military”). President Franklin D. Roosevelt was experienced in his office and was familiar with the military from first-hand experience. He was the key to control, in partnership with Congress, which initially exercised their power in constraining Roosevelt from moving too quickly into a European crisis, then supported him wholeheartedly as Commander-in-Chief with needed resources, including a declaration of war. Roosevelt’s influence and the military’s influence increased significantly in 1942 with the issuance of Executive Order 9082. This reorganized the military chain of command, removing the civilian

secretaries and giving the President not only direct access to the military chiefs but the authority to direct military strategy, tactics, and operations.<sup>16</sup> Roosevelt would be “a Commander in Chief not on the model of Wilson, turning his back on all but the most formal and needful military responsibilities, but on the model of Lincoln and even of Polk, intimately concerned with strategy as well as administration.”<sup>17</sup>

The consequences of this action included an unprecedented level of influence for the military in formulating as well as implementing foreign policy, which in the environment of total war is nearly indistinguishable from military or security policy. The President hoped to integrate foreign and economic policy with the military direction of the war through his own person, but he had no staff to assist him.<sup>18</sup> The military, as the only players in the extant policy apparatus able to integrate, became his staff as well as his agents. The State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee (SWNCC), led by the War Department and composed of each of the named departments, became the locus of national policy coordination. Military influence, then, was considerable in every strategic aspect of the war. Yet the military tended to constrain itself to an advisory role, yielding when the President exercised his prerogatives (something he did in a very loose and unstructured manner) and initiating the development of decision-making machinery that would preclude military control.<sup>19</sup> The Secretary of State and the State Department had little influence, since the diplomats had long since bowed out of the political-military planning for war.<sup>20</sup> Further, a policy of “unconditional surrender,” seeking the aim of complete defeat, left little room for negotiations between adversaries. The terms of surrender could be, and were, handled by military commanders. The military influence extended well beyond political-military planning for victory and included war termination and postwar occupation policies.<sup>21</sup> The influence State retained was incidental to its inclusion in SWNCC.

From this defining moment we conclude that civilian control was never in question, even in a period of total war dominated by military conditions and initiatives. We also conclude that the constructive collaboration between political and military players led to integrated policy and attainment of the political ends. We would add the caveat that the quality of political advice was less than it could have been had the State Department not abrogated its duties. The consequence of not having consistent and sound political advice is illustrated by the outcomes of the Yalta Conference,<sup>22</sup> fundamentally the start of the Cold War. This defining moment reminds us that total war may be successfully prosecuted when the political-military relationship is one defined

by an actively involved President collaborating with an influential military. But the absence of political advice during the prosecution of “total war” can negate success in the period that follows it.

### **Defining Moment #2 – The Aftermath of Total War**

The end of World War II and the rapid transition from managing a total war to managing its aftermath mark another defining moment in political-military relations. The dispersion of former military officers into many of the civilian institutions and departments that guide national security policy formulation changed the complexion of the national security arena. The moribund State Department, suffused by some of the greatest strategic talent in the military, gained new life and new influence with it. The military lost talent (at least in terms of quantities) and influence, but the decline in influence did not reach the traditional post-war depths because of the evident threat posed by the Soviet Union. Consequently, and for the first time, the State Department and the military shared relatively equal influence in the national security arena, and shared, in essence, a common culture in their populations. The opportunity for constructive collaboration was high, and it manifested itself in policies for reconstructing Europe and Japan as a part of a new global order in which the United States would play a dominant role. The death of President Roosevelt and his replacement by President Truman marked a reduction in the influence of the President in national security matters. Nevertheless, the President retained the greatest influence and control.

President Truman, with the Congress, successfully codified this condition of constructive collaboration in passing the National Security Act of 1947. The premises of the reorganization were a unification of the services, an efficient use of dwindling budgets, and an attempt to ensure civil-military coordination and balance. The Truman Doctrine committed the US to a policy of providing economic and financial aid to war-stricken countries and the formation of military alliances as a hedge against Communism. Policy instruments like the Marshall Plan led to State Department preeminence in national policy toward Europe, but the military drove policy in other regions, especially in the Pacific and Asia. The new National Security Council was not rooted firmly enough to balance policies and influence. In fact, until 1949, the Secretary of Defense as a member of the Council had less influence than the Joint Chiefs within the military

establishment. George Marshall as Secretary of State tried to structurally harness policy planning expertise in the Policy Planning Staff headed by Ambassador George Kennan. The staff, and its successor the Policy Planning Council, though manned by talented individuals, has been routinely unable to meet the task of mid- to long-range planning.<sup>23</sup> As the Department of Defense and the National Security Council staff took root and began to increase in influence, the State Department lost influence in policy formulation.

We conclude from this defining moment that constructive collaboration between the political and military actors has the highest potential for producing integrated, focused policy when both civilian and military structures retain influence and share some commonality of understanding with respect to the use of force. The President shapes this relationship. We may also conclude that total war tends to produce a large pool of candidates for policy-related positions in the aftermath, but the frame of reference is one that applies to total war. It may put policy formulation at risk in something other than total war. Finally, we conclude that the introduction of new players into the national security arena, in an effort to structure constructive collaboration, tends to have the opposite effect until roles are completely redefined and competition for existence ceases to be a factor. As the new players are generally part of the political aspect of the relationship, confusion on the one hand leaves a vacuum to be filled by the military on the other hand, and a potential for military autonomy.<sup>24</sup>

### **Defining Moment #3 –Truman vs. MacArthur and the Era of Limited War**

President Truman relieved General Douglas MacArthur for insubordination in April of 1951. This well-known event has been used, since that time, as a benchmark for political-military relations and especially for the constitutional imperative of civilian control. The roots of MacArthur's insubordination are often attributed to his stature as a military colossus, the weakness of a corporate Joint Chiefs of Staff, and finally to MacArthur's insuperable ego. Most discussions of the incident fail to appreciate two other factors – the need for clear policy and the lack of an intellectual basis to provide it. Both of these factors are dominant considerations in limited war.

Policy associated with the Korean War was never clear. At one point Korea was beyond American interests. Later, Korea was the first and most important test of national resolve not to

abide expanding communism. The introduction of US, then UN, military forces had the political purpose of restoring the status quo ante of a divided Korea; then, the purpose changed to unifying Korea under democratic rule. US forces were involved in significant combat actions, resources were channeled in support, and the combat would go on for years – yet the President never sought a declaration of war and the Congress never provided one. For a theater commander, particularly one who had been legitimately operating for several years in a capacity more akin to that of a viceroy than that of a general, the confusion left too much ambiguity and no direction. The political-military relationship at the highest level did nothing to resolve the problem, other than to demonstrate very clearly that civilians retained control of the military. But this was not a matter of civilian control—MacArthur's relief met no military challenge. It was very much a matter of who made the policy. There is no attempt to revise history here, rather, an effort to view the incident in light of the institutional practices that precipitated it. In essence, MacArthur had no partner in policy.

MacArthur was, by nearly every measurement, a brilliant officer and an astute statesman. Harry Truman had familiarity with the military and was demonstrably decisive in a time of war. The Joint Chiefs were all highly experienced professionals with extensive command experience in pursuit of national objectives. The legendary architect of the World War II victory, George C. Marshall, was the Secretary of State and then the Secretary of Defense—the key positions beside the President in the new national security apparatus. How could MacArthur be left with no policy? The answer is a failed appreciation of the essential integration between policy and military action in a condition of limited war. The total war approach simply would not work in a war that did not seek unconditional surrender through the unconstrained application of all elements of national power. In total war, vacillating policy objectives may cause delays in action, but they tend to permit military planning to expand unconstrained until the final objective of capitulation is met.<sup>25</sup> Costs, implications, and alternatives do not matter much, since the end tends to justify the means in total war. The Presidential and Congressional policy vacillations in 1941, reflecting a larger uncertainty of national policy,<sup>26</sup> were ominously similar to the policy vacillations of 1950.

From this defining moment we conclude that in a policy void, particularly when, as in the case of Korea, a directive for immediate military action precedes the policy determination, the military makes a plan of action without a political end having been determined. This thrusts the

military at once into a dominant position in both the formulation and implementation dimensions. Policies formed *post hoc* in total war accede to the military actions taken. In limited war, acquiescence may lead to total war; thus *post hoc* policies become inherently restrictive and do not provide positive direction, only control. Historically, at least in America, the requirement for action precedes policy. For the military hand on the sword to surmise the forthcoming limited policy aim, or for the political hand to formulate a limited policy that will not be overcome by ongoing military events, both must constructively collaborate in the policy formulation dimension to produce clear ends, not ambiguous ones. Another military leader with the same makeup as General MacArthur will probably never emerge. Limited war, on the other hand, continues to find a place in the national security arena. The lessons of this defining moment continue to resonate in the present day.

#### **Defining Moment #4 – The Cuban Missile Crisis**

The Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 marked another defining moment in the course of political-military relations—one that would undermine constructive collaboration, and, with it, national security policy, for decades to come. The antecedent to the Cuban Missile Crisis was President Kennedy’s inheritance from President Eisenhower. Eisenhower matured the national security apparatus while giving greater influence to National Security Council process, including an expansion of the Council staff and subcommittees. Already quite familiar with the intent of the Joint Chiefs structure as well as its internal dynamics, he actually limited military input and influence to the implementation dimension. Kennedy inherited a national security apparatus that was well organized, if not somewhat more oriented to helping the president avoid a policy error.<sup>27</sup> Kennedy’s preference, however, was for a more streamlined process capable of dealing with rapid changes inherent in a dynamic world. He dismantled the statutory national security apparatus, replacing it with an expanded National Security Council staff under the direction of his special assistant for national security affairs, McGeorge Bundy, who, in the words of David Halberstam, would soon become “the most invaluable man in the Kennedy Administration.”<sup>28</sup> In the Bay of Pigs fiasco that occurred shortly after his inauguration, President Kennedy was ill-advised by every member of the Executive Branch brought in to advise him. All were unanimous. After the event he discovered that all were wrong.<sup>29</sup> By the time of the Cuban Missile Crisis more than a year later, Kennedy’s confidence in the traditionalists, especially the

Joint Chiefs, was waning quickly. The statutory NSC tended to meet infrequently and focused on long-term policy issues. For crises, Kennedy relied on *an ad hoc* Executive Committee (EXCOM) comprised of trusted advisors independent of the statutory national security apparatus.

As we have indicated elsewhere in this paper, particularly in quoting Bernard Brodie, the President was appalled by the lack of strategic vision and the lack of sensitivity to political realities demonstrated by the Joint Chiefs (and others) throughout the crisis. The episode brought the specter of nuclear war into clear view, yet the statutory advisors maintained their stance. Personalities clearly have a role in this historic event, but not in the quality of collective advice, something that is more cultural than individual.

The Cuban Missile Crisis convinced many witnesses,<sup>30</sup> ones who would play significant roles in Vietnam policy, that the military was not able to comprehend the requirements of limited war given its predisposition to use military force and to seek unfettered authority to use it as they saw fit. Under the circumstances of the Cold War this was unacceptable. Military influence in the national security arena after the Cuban Missile Crisis was at the lowest point since the beginning of World War II. The Secretary of State also lost influence, almost to the World War II level, in exchange for an increase in influence by the Special Assistant and also by the Secretary of Defense. Constructive collaboration was not possible even when the levels of influence were relatively equal, because some players were rapidly ascending in influence while others were rapidly losing it. This would be the condition of political-military relations as the nation began another limited war. The consequences would haunt the national security arena for the rest of the century.

### **Defining Moment #5 – Abandoning Hope and the Vietnamese**

The period of 1963 to 1968 was as turbulent in the national security arena as it was in the rest of American society. Vietnam marked another excursion into limited war, this time complicated by an unconventional force unlike that faced in Korea a decade before. The lessons of limited war had still not been addressed by the time the US became involved in Vietnam. National security policies had changed substantively with each new administration, but the apparatus did not. President Johnson, who inherited the initial involvement in Vietnam as well as the *ad hoc* apparatus, was not as adroit in foreign policy as he was in domestic politics. A

discredited senior military and a civilian policy apparatus filled with lawyers, professors, and businessmen<sup>31</sup> all combined to make constructive collaboration in the formulation of policy virtually impossible. Ironically, the relatively equal, albeit low, influence of the military and the State Department did allow for collaboration against Defense civilians, who by 1968 were intent on reversing Vietnam policy and limiting the power of the military.<sup>32</sup>

The escalation in Vietnam and subsequent departure are children of many parents. No one player can reasonably be assessed with the blame. The true failure was the absence of an integrated policy to achieve a stated end. In the policy vacuum, the military continued to pursue a conventional approach to waging war. Its optimistic reports and requests for additional resources were heard by the President but balanced against other priorities, leaving the policy still unclear and the military requirements unmet. The President's willingness not only to initiate military action but to escalate it to the level of war in everything but name, while manipulating the public, the Congress and the press,<sup>33</sup> put new stresses on the constitutional framework of national security decision-making. It also drew the Congress into a much more active role in policy formulation than it had performed in previous wars. Ultimately the Congress, responding to popular opinion concerning an unpopular conflict, pulled support from the President and the military. The war had been lost at home.

This defining moment forever changed the dynamics of American national security policy making. The institution of the presidency was severely wounded by a new skepticism that would not go away. Attempts by future presidents, notably President Nixon, to exert wartime influence would meet with certain legislative responses by Congress. Prior to this period Congressional approaches to national security often transcended partisan politics. They would never do so again. The military underwent severe reductions in resources and manpower, and more importantly a crisis of identity that would lead it into a period of hollowness and depression. Upon emerging from the period of depression, the military officer corps vowed never again to be left unsupported by politicians and the population when applying force. The use of force became conditioned on meeting these preconditions. The State Department lost talented foreign service officers, who were replaced by a newer generation that shared the public distrust of the military establishment. The ethos cultivated by Secretary Dean Rusk, in which one did not confront the military on military matters, would be superseded by one which confronted the military on nearly every military matter, in the mold of Roger Hilsman.<sup>34</sup> State

would never again have as its Secretary a diplomat who had risen out of the department's ranks. The Defense Department withdrew from influencing national security policy to focus almost entirely on managing the bureaucratic processes of the Department and the services. The role of the Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs would pick up the spoils, emerging by the end of the war as the ascendant player in the national security arena, dropping the modifier "special," and transforming the National Security Council staff from a coordinating body to an operating headquarters.<sup>35</sup>

As for constructive collaboration, Vietnam proved conclusively that the absence of constructive collaboration in policy formulation entailing the use of military force leads to a national debacle in a condition of limited war. But Vietnam, an ever-present reminder in political-military relations since, could do nothing to guarantee a place for constructive collaboration. That would have to come through study and understanding. It would have to come from the players themselves.

### **Defining Moment #6 – Goldwater-Nichols**

The Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, also known as the Goldwater-Nichols Act, was a defining moment in political-military relations. We have previously addressed the origins of the Act and many of its consequences. We will summarize here by acknowledging that the Act was a Congressional action that protected the role of the military in the national security arena and accelerated the intellectual metamorphosis needed to make military officers more effective in strategic analysis than their predecessors had been. The full measure of this Act's influence on the national security arena has not been tallied. As recently as 1993, some writers continued to repeat the broadly accepted view that the military does not nurture strategists, and that therefore the military, being largely restricted to an instrumental role or to the implementation dimension (in our model), will continue to take a back seat to civilian strategists who set policy directions.<sup>36</sup> Our research indicates that this view does not appreciate the extraordinary change brought about by the Goldwater-Nichols Act and the Skelton Panel for Professional Military Education, both of which focused directly on producing an officer corps that can meet collaboratively with civilian policy makers and usefully contribute to policy formulation. The Act is just over a decade old, and the findings of the panel have been in effect for less time than

that. But already the practitioners report a difference in the impacts of the military in the policy arena. The assignment policy mandated by the Act distributes officers developed under the new system to positions in key policy offices outside of the uniformed military departments, thereby spreading the professional military skill more broadly. Old views are not easily dispelled. Only time and testing will tell.

### **Defining Moment #7 – Desert Shield and Desert Storm**

The Bush Administration's reaction to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in the summer of 1990 marked a defining moment in political-military relations and confirmed the potential of constructive collaboration. The event occurred as the US was reconsidering its role in the world without the constraints of the Cold War. Additionally, it occurred during an administration composed of very experienced national security players who knew one another. The levels of influence of each of the players in the arena were higher than they had been in many years. This is due in large part to congressional action on behalf of the military, a restoration of trust in the national security advisor position, and a hiatus in the bureaucratic turf wars between State and Defense. The President was active in foreign policy. The Secretary of State spoke for the President and skillfully assisted him in building and maintaining a wartime coalition (but he was an outsider to the State Department, and thus the department's influence was considerably less than that of the Secretary<sup>37</sup>). The Secretary of Defense was very much in control of the Defense Department and the uniformed services, while also allowing for the competition of ideas between the civilian and the military staffs of the department. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs was intimately familiar with the national security arena from previous experience and was empowered by the Goldwater-Nichols Act to have direct input into the national security decision-making process. The Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs was a retired general who had previously served in the Advisor position and who actually directed the policy formulation process, more effectively integrating the statutory players.

One should be careful here not to conclude that the efficient formulation and implementation of policy shown in the Bush Administration was simply one of personalities and styles. Comparing the Bush Administration and the Kennedy Administration shows both to have had abundantly talented players in the key advisory positions. Both used a flexible approach to

policy formulation based on the competition of the best ideas. Both had the counsel of an experienced soldier-statesmen. The substantive difference is in *where* these similar conditions were located. In the Kennedy Administration, collaboration occurred within the EXCOM, beyond the statutory apparatus that would be required to implement decisions made by the President on EXCOM advice. In the Bush Administration, constructive collaboration occurred among the statutory players themselves. The apparatus itself was functioning.

During Operation Desert Storm, civilian leadership was released from the constraints of superpower conflict and deftly received international and domestic support for action against the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Congressional involvement did not amount to a declaration of war, but an extraordinary debate occurred in public view, producing a resolution to allow the President to use force. Administration policy was clearly articulated, and the military had broad authority, appropriately reviewed and modified by civilian decision makers, in planning operations to achieve the policy goals. Major policy issues were discussed and the recommendation represented all sides. For the first time, constructive collaboration was evident in a limited war. Desert Storm still left room for improvement in constructive collaboration, particularly in terms of producing a clearer vision of what happens after military force is terminated. How do the other elements of power build upon the military successes to achieve a long-term policy? This aspect was inadequately addressed not because of exclusion from the process, but perhaps because the appropriate players were not prepared to contribute.

### **Out of control**

We have emphasized repeatedly that the issues in political-military relations are more matters of influence than control. There is a relationship, of course, between the two. Excessive influence exceeds controls that should contain it. Our analysis indicates that there have been four occasions where proper control has been exceeded. The graphic portrayal in figure 2 shows this with lettered clouds, indicating places where the influence curve of any particular player is higher than that of the President. Or, as it pertains to civilian control of the military, when the military curve is higher than the broken line representing the level of influence of the most influential civilian policy maker, the military is portrayed out of control. "Cloud A" shows the World War I military as the most influential player in the national security policy arena at that

time, having virtual autonomy. "Cloud B" reflects Secretary of Defense McNamara's prominent influence, even exceeding that of the President, regarding national security policy from 1963 to 1966. "Cloud C" represents the consolidation of influence accompanying Henry Kissinger's duties as the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs. This abruptly ended when Kissinger moved to Secretary of State, marking a growth in State influence that remained well within control. "Cloud D" indicates the excessive influence that led to the Iran-Contra episode. In this instance, the National Security Council staff operated beyond the rest of the national security apparatus, formulating and implementing policies as an advocate. We would add that simple proximity of curves, that is, relatively equal influence, like that in the era from 1986 to the present, does not indicate a potential control crisis as long as the curves are relatively flat. An imminent crisis of control is indicated by a pronounced change in slope, representing the end of a rapid change in the influence of some player.

## PREDICTIONS

Current political-military relations and constructive collaboration within them are more than just a snapshot in time. In fact, when the current status is viewed with the paths of relative influence between institutions and individuals as a context, future trends may be deduced. We deduce that, among the institutions (not including the Presidency) that define the political-military relationship in the national security arena, the Office of the Secretary of Defense will retain the greatest influence. The uniformed military, particularly the Joint Staff, will continue to gain in influence. The National Security Council (assuming an approach similar to today's for use by future Presidents) will gradually decline in influence. And the Department of State will decline to the point of requiring a significant action to reverse the trend. These future trends are graphically portrayed in figure 2, and here is why we deduce what we have.

The influence of the Office of the Secretary of Defense has been relatively high since the era of Dr. William Perry as Secretary of Defense. Improved collaboration within the Pentagon, especially with the Joint Staff, provided for vetting of ideas and policies before they solidify in the interagency arena. Defense professionals, who are at least familiar with the military instrument from daily contact, and who have direct access to the military for information, are able to produce policy proposals that are more thorough than those proffered by other national

security institutions. Process enhancements that generally follow structural reorganizations will only improve the quality of work being done by the OSD, especially in the areas of policy and international affairs, and will potentially increase OSD influence while directly, and adversely, affecting the State Department and potentially the NSC as well. The military will not be adversely affected by this trend unless there is a drastic, McNamara-like change in the OSD approach, decreasing the constructive collaboration with the military and in turn exacerbating the effects of a decreasing pool of government civilians who are familiar with the military instrument. Concerns over control, instead of constructive collaboration and influence, could trigger such a dramatic change.

The Joint Staff will benefit greatly from the arrival of a generation of senior officers who began their service with the relatively robust resources of the Reagan Administration years and who were professionally developed for most of their careers under the provisions of the Goldwater-Nichols Act. This will result in a short-term increase in relative influence, followed by a plateau. Other agencies will move relative to the Joint Staff because the quality of staff work and the recommendations forwarded from the Joint Staff will remain noticeably better, even if other institutions begin a program of sustained professional development. This will be so primarily because of the military's embedded system of integrating lessons and passing them on to successive generations in the form of living doctrine. The recommendations from the Joint Staff will form the foundation for strategy and policy formulation unless there is an intentional "dumbing down" of the military or unless constructive collaboration in the formulation dimension is eclipsed by control, which is more appropriate in the implementation dimension. The latter scenario would imply a disregard for military inputs into policy. A degree of influence will come from the military's knowledge base and from the burgeoning efforts to assist other agencies in professional development programs and to familiarize others with the military instrument of power. In the aggregate, however, these military efforts will protect other agencies from slipping too far away from the military, thereby preventing a condition in which the military would be without a partner in the policy arena.

The National Security Council will continue to exist as a corporate body with its associated subgroups for formulating policy proposals. But the NSC staff will compete for influence with the Department of Defense, further eclipsing the role of the State Department in policy formulation as well as coordination. The National Security Advisor will at least retain the

current level of access to the President and influence in the policy arena until another abuse on the scale of Iran-Contra occurs, or until Congressional action imposes some degree of accountability through a confirmation process.

The State Department will move further away from a position of influence. The Secretary of State will continue to come from career paths other than the State Department, and Special Envoys selected from beyond the foreign service pool will be the principal agents tasked with meeting the preventive diplomacy requirements of the National Security Strategy.<sup>38</sup> Resources will not be provided to enhance the performance of agencies reorganized under State Department supervision. State Department effectiveness will be called into question in virtually all areas but foreign representation and public diplomacy. The policy leadership task inherent in the State Department's mission<sup>39</sup> will increasingly be performed by the NSC or the Defense Department. A crisis or an act of Congress will be necessary to restore State to the status it had in 1947 under George C. Marshall.

Finally, the potential for constructive collaboration in the future is better than it has been since the end of World War II. The continuation of limited war in the form of responses to regional crises makes the need for constructive collaboration at least as great as it has been since the end of the Cold War. Initiatives like PDD 56 are efforts to codify constructive collaboration and will help only if the players are serious about using it. This leads us to conclude that constructive collaboration in the future is dependent upon the understanding and education that happens in the present.

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### ***Part III endnotes***

<sup>1</sup> Bernard Brodie, *War and Politics*, p. 473.

<sup>2</sup> Jordan, Taylor, and Korb describe the misgivings about the State Department's performance, which they consider to be exaggerated in many cases, with great clarity on pages 100-104.

<sup>3</sup> Based on examples by Jordan, Taylor, and Korb, pg. 103, and substantiated by a review of the biographies of current senior State Department officials serving at the secretary or undersecretary levels. Source, "Biographical Information on Principal Officers of the Department of State", available [http://www.state.gov/www/about\\_state/biography/index.html](http://www.state.gov/www/about_state/biography/index.html). Accessed 1/29/99 6:48PM.

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<sup>4</sup> The term “brilliant amateurs” comes from an interview with two Directors of the State Department’s Foreign Service Institute, the organ of the department tasked with providing professional development to State Department officials.

<sup>5</sup> Interview with General Colin L. Powell, 20 November 1998.

<sup>6</sup> Some senior officers, like General Powell, would add that since 1986 the Joint Staff, especially the Plans and Policy Directorate (J5), is also the Secretary’s staff, coordinating and competing with the Office of the Secretary of Defense to provide the best recommendations for the Secretary’s consideration. Per interview with General Powell.

<sup>7</sup> This position no longer exists per se. A close descendant is the Director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), who provides advice to the NSC but is no longer a statutory member.

<sup>8</sup> Jordan, Taylor, Korb, p. 96.

<sup>9</sup> Here we are referring to the President himself, supported by his assistant for national security affairs, the National Security Council as an entity, and the National Security Council staff.

<sup>10</sup> Allen R. Millet, Mackubin Thomas Owens, Bernard E. Trainor, Edward C. Meyer, and Robert Murray, “The Reorganization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff: A Critical Analysis”, 1986, p. 6.

<sup>11</sup> Cynthia Watson, *U.S. National Security Policy Groups*, 1990, p. xxii. This book is an excellent compendium of over 135 policy groups and their origins, membership, organization, funding, policy concerns, and tactics.

<sup>12</sup> Watson, pp. xxiii – xxiv.

<sup>13</sup> Watson, pp. xxvi – xxvii.

<sup>14</sup> We note here that the term “relative influence” refers to the influence one player has compared to others in the national security policy arena.

<sup>15</sup> We fully recognize that we are taking some risk in implying some detailed mathematical analysis. We are, in fact, simply trying to synthesize the points made by others regarding variations in influence in a way that graphically illustrates impacts and trends in policy formulation.

<sup>16</sup> Russell F Weigley, *History of the United States Army*. (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1967), p. 451.

<sup>17</sup> Weigley, *History*, p. 453.

<sup>18</sup> Weigley, *History*, p. 453.

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<sup>19</sup> We are referring to the initiatives originating in the War Department that ultimately led to the formulation of the post-war national defense establishment, codified in the 1947 reorganization act.

<sup>20</sup> Jordan, Taylor, Korb, p. 166.

<sup>21</sup> Jordan, Taylor, Korb, p. 165.

<sup>22</sup> Puryear, *Nineteen Stars*, pp. 322-323. Puryear summarizes the views of George C. Marshall who admits that while playing a significantly influential role, the advice he offered came without considering political consequences, a task that belonged, he believed, to politicians and statesmen.

<sup>23</sup> Jordan, Taylor, Korb, p. 104.

<sup>24</sup> Weigley, *History*, p. 495.

<sup>25</sup> An illustration of this is the point made by Albert C. Wedemeyer who, as a major, drew up the famous Victory Program. In his planning, the extent to which the government would commit itself to the defeat of the Axis Powers had not been clearly defined. He had to assume maximum American mobilization and he factored in the demands for sustaining key industries, services, and civilian life while producing the required materiel. All of this planning was done in a policy vacuum yet it ended up, four years later, being remarkably accurate. From Weigley, *History*, p. 435.

<sup>26</sup> Weigley, *History*, p. 434.

<sup>27</sup> Jordan, Taylor, Korb, p. 97.

<sup>28</sup> David Halberstam, *The Best and the Brightest*. (New York: Random House, 1972) p. 61.

<sup>29</sup> Jordan, Taylor, Korb, p. 97.

<sup>30</sup> Among those who would line up against the statutory national security apparatus and especially against the military's involvement in policy formulation would be the President; the Vice President, who would become President; the Secretary of Defense, who would reform civilian control of the military and direct the buildup in Vietnam; and the Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, who would return with many other Kennedy government officials back to America's greatest universities to teach coming generations,

<sup>31</sup> Halberstam, p. 651.

<sup>32</sup> Halberstam, p. 651.

<sup>33</sup> Halberstam, p. 655.

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<sup>34</sup> Halberstam recounts an early exchange between Roger Hilsman, then Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, and General Lyman Lemnitzer, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He claims that President Kennedy nurtured this kind of audacity, delighting in the willingness of Hilsman to directly confront the military, pp. 254-255.

<sup>35</sup> The title Special Assistant changed after Dr. Henry Kissinger took the post. Jordan, Taylor, Korb, p. 94.

<sup>36</sup> Jordan, Taylor, Korb, p. 187.

<sup>37</sup> This separation between the influence of the Secretary of State and the influence of the Department of State has negative consequences that were made manifest repeatedly in the Bush Administration. In the invasion of Panama, in Desert Shield/Desert Storm, and in the relief of Somalia the lack of a well developed campaign plan for restoring law and order, propping up key services, providing aid, and carrying the termination of hostilities to a "next step", caused policy reversals and undermined a stable outcome. In World War II, a total war, the military fulfilled these roles. In limited wars conducted within a larger framework of peace and stability the State Department (and associated agencies like the Agency for International Development, the US Information Agency, and the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency) has proved incapable of meeting these tasks.

<sup>38</sup> *National Security Strategy 1998*, p. 8.

<sup>39</sup> Taken from *Overview of the State Department*.

## Part IV. A View from the Arena

### LIVING WITH TENSION

The dominant theme to emerge from our interviews is that tension is an inherent component of US political-military relations. Moreover, the level of tension between civilian leaders and the military hierarchy determines the tenor of the relationship.<sup>1</sup> Clearly, this tenor fluctuates over time between two polar extremes: vibrant discourse and professional cooperation on the high side; mutual distrust and hostility on the low side. This dichotomy largely emanates from cultural differences between political and military participants. Simplified, diplomats and political leaders value ambiguity because it provides a broad and flexible arena for the making of foreign policy; military leaders seek to eliminate ambiguity because it impedes operational effectiveness.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, as Professor Richard Kohn notes, civil-military relations are a complex meld of many human factors, which explains why they are both fascinating to study and yet so difficult to comprehend.

...understand that there is always going on simultaneously cooperation, trust, mistrust, negotiation, friction, misunderstanding, loyalty, and sometimes disloyalty. These are complex and ambiguous problems. There has been an enormous amount of conflict over civil-military relations in American history.<sup>3</sup>

This should not come as a surprise. After all, national security is a serious and highly contentious subject affecting a host of issues—not the least of which is state survival. As General Andrew J. Goodpaster, who once served as staff secretary in the Eisenhower Administration, has noted, “security is not an absolute. Somebody has to decide on risks and weigh that against costs and burdens. And the military cannot just lay down a flat statement of requirements, but should have the role of giving advice as to what the risks are based on competent professional analysis so they can be weighed by the higher authority.”<sup>4</sup> Of course, senior civilian leaders are the higher authority to whom General Goodpaster refers.

## Why Tension Matters

If tension is a natural component of political-military affairs, then is it feasible to use tension to measure the state of the relationship? We say, yes. Actually, we find three different levels of tension: normal, heightened, and dysfunctional. Each has its own manifestations and attendant consequences, which are quite revealing about the relationship.

*Normal tension.* First is normal tension, which revolves around expectations. Here, civilian and military actors posture themselves to participate in the policy debate that precedes almost every decision to use force. The military considers such a decision largely a matter of “deciding why and where Americans would allow their sons and daughters to die.”<sup>5</sup> Accordingly, the military frequently appears to embrace a bias against the use of force. Conversely, the armed services view civilian enthusiasm for a solution using military means as a sign of “emoting.”<sup>6</sup> The result is that both civilian and military actors view each other with some suspicion. Normal tension involves niche preservation; it is about being a player, which is a prerequisite to having one’s views heard and acted upon. More important, it serves to ensure that honest discussion and open debates precede the decision to use force. Nevertheless, normal tension permits reasonable expectations to prevail on both sides. Civilians expect capable military leaders will dutifully provide them relevant and credible advice irrespective of how often it is accepted or incorporated into final policy. Likewise, the military expect senior civilian decision makers to genuinely value their participation and solicit military input even if it challenges conventional wisdom or preferred policy choices.

*Heightened tension.* A second level of tension is heightened tension. This tension centers on the roles (as opposed to merely the expectations) played by government agencies and individual actors. Heightened tension usually involves multiple forms of friction occurring simultaneously. At the lowest level, it frequently surfaces as a “requirements versus resources” dispute.<sup>7</sup> Such a dispute typically emerges when the State Department identifies worldwide foreign policy requirements for US assistance. Invariably, the State Department requests Defense Department resources to satisfy the requirements. On the surface, this process appears straightforward and logical. In reality, quite the opposite is true. The central problem is the aftermath of the Cold War, with its demands for US forces to assist in humanitarian crises, small-scale contingencies, and peacekeeping operations—all of which increased dramatically at the same time military

force structure and the DOD budget declined.<sup>8</sup> In the absence of a major Soviet threat, the State Department believes DOD is capable of being more globally proactive and has an available pool of resources to do so. For its part, DOD often perceives doing more with less as unreasonable, particularly when the missions seek the commitment of integral parts of larger units, leaving the remnant unable to fulfill the military's primary function.

Another friction point occurs over what former National Security Council (NSC) advisor Jock Covey calls "the failure to adequately articulate US interests, goals, and objectives within a specific security context."<sup>9</sup> This causes an enormous backlash effect inside the Pentagon, which in turn affects the political-military relationship in the interagency context. Before the President even decides to commit US forces abroad, the military pleads to know the end state and exit strategy.<sup>10</sup> This is understandable, given the Vietnam legacy and the strong support within the military for frames of reference like the Weinberger Doctrine, emphasizing the appropriateness of using force only when vital national interests are at stake.<sup>11</sup> It is also not surprising given the military adherence to Clausewitz's dictum that the statesman and the military leader both must decide first upon the kind of war on which they are embarking, neither mistaking it for, nor trying to turn it into, something that it is not. Nevertheless, the military's low tolerance for ambiguity in the early stages of policy formulation heightens tension and strains relationships throughout the national security community.

A final source of friction that contributes to heightened tension is the clash over defense issues between the executive and legislative branches. JCS members must be loyal to the Commander-in-Chief and at the same time speak the unadulterated truth when asked for their opinions while testifying before Congress. As the nation witnessed during the Senate Armed Services readiness hearings conducted in September 1998, this balancing act is much more difficult for military leaders than one might suppose.<sup>12</sup> In fact, it is not unusual for Congress to treat Major Generals and Lieutenant Generals as though they are political appointees rather than military subordinates who work for the Secretary of Defense, and who in turn is subordinate to the President.<sup>13</sup> Curiously, the most acrimonious disputes in Washington are not civil-military disputes, but, disputes between civilians in Congress and civilians in the Executive Branch.<sup>14</sup> Senior military officers often find themselves in the middle of the conflict, either as proxies or as objects of the controversy. Sometimes, admittedly, military officers exploit the tension to the advantage of the military – a very dangerous tactic but one that is used nevertheless.

In short, heightened tension results from excessive friction between civilian and military leaders over time. It ultimately manifests itself in senior civilian leaders' believing they are capable of formulating national security policy without much assistance. They persist in believing military advisors are not intellectually capable of providing quality advice on national security matters without unduly distracting senior military leaders from their technical (specialist) warfighting responsibilities to participate in strategy discussions. On the other hand, the military views the declining number of civilian leaders with military experience or defense knowledge with alarm. This contributes to the services' believing civilian leaders are dependent upon military advice because national security is far too important to leave exclusively to civil servants or political appointees.

*Dysfunctional tension.* A third type of tension is dysfunctional tension. This occurs when the functional tension either erodes or explodes to yield little to no active tension. This has the chilling consequence of suppressing effective communications through ignorance or acquiescence. It prevents proper vetting of varying views to the detriment of vibrant discourse and mutual trust. Both the Cuban missile crisis and the Vietnam War cases presented at the outset of the paper fall in this category. Dysfunctional tension occurs when civilian and military players become highly polarized and institutionally estranged. Teamwork and cooperation are virtually non-existent. Constructive collaboration cannot occur under these circumstances, and policy is generally misguided as a result.

Dysfunctional tension manifests itself in a host of ways. One manifestation is excessive civilian deference to military proposals. In the 1950s and early 1960s, civilian deference was a matter of protocol that one simply did not transgress, even for senior civilians like Secretary of State Dean Rusk, who had considerable military experience. By the 1990s, deference was more commonly due to inexperience with the military or a general lack of confidence in confronting military expertise.<sup>15</sup> This was a common complaint during the first Clinton Administration, as newcomers to the national security process struggled to overcome military opposition to expanding roles in Somalia and Haiti. This is a marked contrast to President Bush's rejection of the military's first tactical plan for the ground war against Iraq.<sup>16</sup>

Dysfunctional tension also occurs when there is excessive civilian involvement in the execution of military operations—the implementation of policy. White House involvement in

the tactical details of bombing Hanoi and the control of the Mayaguez Affair are well-known examples. General Carl Vuono, former Army Chief of Staff, provides another. Vuono reports that during the domestic riots of the 1960s, the White House wanted almost hourly updates on the number of trucks and trailers his unit dispatched from Fort Bragg, North Carolina to both Tuscaloosa and Birmingham, Alabama.<sup>17</sup> Vuono is quick to point out that civilian leaders have a right to almost any information they desire. Nevertheless, the nature of the information request reflects the state of mutual trust and confidence between the actors. Additionally, administrative opportunity costs are frequently overlooked.

A final example of dysfunctional tension occurs when the military is perceived to be arbiters of policy they do not collectively like. Professor Richard Kohn finds this behavior extremely dangerous, because it makes the military just another special interest group with which senior civilian leaders must negotiate.<sup>18</sup> Kohn argues this was not the intent of the Founding Fathers, who he believes valued obedience and subordination more than they did coming up with the “right” security policy. In qualifying this argument, Kohn neither advocates blind obedience by military leaders nor condones senior military leaders’ taking their unresolved grievances public.<sup>19</sup>

Historically, “American military’s involvement in national security policy has been restricted to instrumental and administrative roles.”<sup>20</sup> They are often restricted to the narrow question of how the country should engage, not whether it should or should not. American political-military relations have highlighted the two sides of the tension. Elected officials have the constitutional and legal prerogatives of civilian control of the military. The American military has the professional responsibility for the stewardship of that civilian control.

## **STRUCTURE AND PROCESS COUNT**

Organization cannot make a genius out of a dunce, but it can help the leader avoid uninformed or misinformed decisions.

General Andrew J. Goodpaster, USA (Ret)<sup>21</sup>

Each person who comes to the table in national security policy formulation brings their organizational baggage. The natural inclination is to represent the department's interests first, sometimes at the expense of national interest. This can be resolved in two ways: 1) push against human nature to ask people to rise above it; or 2) play to human nature and set up the processes and organization to pit one against the other, as we have done throughout our government. We prefer the time-tested, simple genius of the latter.

Structure and process help to keep tension within functional limits. The proper role of the national security process is between policy formulation and implementation (providing structure for appropriate decision making), and the process works well.<sup>22</sup> Organizational structure and process help establish relationships with counterparts in government and allies before a crisis exists. If overbuilt or overplayed, these tools can combine to cause senior decision makers to spend excessive time on minutia or crises. This leaves too little time to think or develop imaginative policies that would address problems at a level lower than use of military force.

In the political-military portion of the national security policy-making apparatus, legislative acts, especially since 1947, have served to further refine the primary function envisioned in the Constitution. The latest of these landmark changes to meet changing global and domestic conditions is the Goldwater-Nichols Defense Reorganization Act of 1986. As one significant former participant said, "the military plays a stronger role post Goldwater-Nichols, and thank God."<sup>23</sup> We understand this to mean the Act facilitated constructive collaboration, not that the military is in charge or dominant. The process changes he implied were raised in the majority of our interviews. To summarize an earlier discussion of Goldwater-Nichols, the Act empowered the JCS Chairman as the principal advisor to the Secretary of Defense and the President; it reduced inter-service rivalry; it liberated the Joint Chiefs of Staff from the tyranny of a "lowest common denominator" approach to military advice; and it ushered in a new era of military professionalism. Goldwater-Nichols also strengthened the operational chain of command by giving unified commanders in chief authority commensurate with their responsibilities. At the same time this change created a potential political-military weakness, since the commanders-in-chief have no counterpart *per se* in the State Department (we will return to this point later in the paper). As noted by our interview subjects, Goldwater-Nichols had a net effect of strengthening political-military relations and improving the quality of military

advice and counsel to civilian leaders. Countering this assessment, some argue that the Chairman now has too much of a voice and the military is providing more than purely military advice in interagency settings, fanning the embers of a civilian control issue that will not go away. We see this control issue being offset by the reduced power of the other Service Chiefs vis-à-vis the Secretary of Defense. We also see the Chairman's high influence, and similarly that of the military participants in the interagency groups, as being "too much" only when senior civilians are not prepared to fulfill their roles in the national security arena. Modifications to structure and process are not the solutions to be sought here—professional preparation is.

Each department within the executive branch develops a unique structure that is supposed to enhance policy formulation and institutionalizes civil-military fusion. This structure is both formal and informal. Structure divides further into that within DOD, which then interacts with other agencies. Within DOD today is the Top Four meeting<sup>24</sup> and the Early Coordination Meeting<sup>25</sup>. Informal interaction of the players in the course of near daily contact strengthens these formal structures. This helps enable a focused approach for input from DOD, as well as effective oversight within the Department.

The formal interagency process in this structure includes the Interagency Working Groups (IWG—Assistant Secretaries from the agencies involved), Deputies Meetings and Principals Meetings.<sup>26</sup> These provide a deliberate vetting of ideas and are largely successful in that regard, if not somewhat cumbersome, based on our interviews. Within that process, senior officials (often one- and two-star officers from the military) sometimes facilitate meetings. Calling the senior levels of this mechanism together too often and too hurriedly for too many crises can be problematic. The cost in lost opportunities for long-range policy formulation and ability to prepare are difficult to measure, but are lamented by participants past and present.<sup>27</sup>

Regular informal gatherings complement the formal interagency process today, such as the weekly "ABC" (Albright, Berger and Cohen) lunches and White House policy breakfasts. Similar gatherings at the Deputies level and IWG allow development of rapport and exchanges of ideas. Often these occasions help to flesh out new ideas or take on items that would not otherwise reach the formal gatherings, or keep issues from becoming crises demanding more and higher-level gatherings. Many other social events serve to increase the familiarity and rapport among these important players. The central theme here, which we support, is that all participants

(including military) must constructively collaborate from early in the policy process.<sup>28</sup> For contentious issues such as use of force, the context and forum for that discussion must deliberately accommodate opposing views.

Numerous interfaces also occur with Congress, establishing rapport and credibility of both military and civilian policy contributors. Congress also plays a vital role in oversight of the three-star and four-star confirmation process, as well as confirmation of political appointees, and the trump card of civilian control of the military—funding. Throughout our system of governance, there is a vibrant, effective, and perhaps intentionally inefficient process to mitigate imperfect selection criteria for important positions.

Another important element of process is some set of preconditions for the use of force, such as the Weinberger Doctrine. Although debate on this particular doctrine and its variations continues, some salient points are vital to consider within the national security nexus. Key among these points is the primacy of a clear policy focus or vision. Without one, people find it difficult to operate; they are unsure which way to go; they will not know when to challenge someone else on an errant position. In short, lack of an agreed policy focus frustrates the process and raises tension unnecessarily.<sup>29</sup> Perhaps we are really advocating a Clausewitzian doctrine of clear understanding of political purpose more than the restrictive, almost isolationist Weinberger Doctrine. Regardless of form, preconditions to the use of force should serve two purposes. They should 1) assure that force is the right way to go; and 2) assure that force is going to be applied in a way that will achieve the objective at a sustainable cost.<sup>30</sup>

Regardless of what the future brings, a single person must serve to integrate the elements of national power vetted by the process, and this person will vary depending on urgency, locale, and issue. If the future holds more conflicts such as those in the Balkans today, then we need a change in process to include other agencies. This is already under development with Presidential Decision Directive (PDD) 56 as a start. This will also present new cultural challenges to DOD, an agency that is not well suited to, or familiar with, supporting other agencies as one of its primary activities.

The established processes help set roles, which lead to expectations of the participants beyond those codified in law. These often play out in reaction to events or perceptions that demonstrate behavior inconsistent with expectations. A military officer may perceive what he or

she is doing to be providing the legally mandated advice and counsel to a civilian leader. That civilian leader may read the same action as the military trying to define the mission to suit its desires. Better common understanding of the roles played by others in the process and open communications are vital to mitigate the potential distractions from productive policy formulation. A structure to facilitate this kind of development for political and military actors alike can only be found today in the professional military education system. Without some intentional restructuring of civilian departments, especially the State Department, we foresee a continuing impediment to constructive collaboration.

How civilian and military leaders below the President, use (or ignore) the process significantly influences the relationship. This also effects other structural guidance. A President may sign a PDD, but it carries no weight unless key civilian leaders (roughly the Under Secretary level) use it. DOD may enjoy an efficiency advantage over other departments because, when the Secretary of Defense makes a decision the Department, sensitive to authority and hierarchy, will in all likelihood, dutifully carry it out. This is less frequently the case in other agencies, which are more prone to internal loyalty problems with the regular changes in political leadership and more informal approaches. DOD's advantage combines with a "can do" military culture, making the Pentagon a very seductive choice to carry out a required action. As long as time is not an urgent factor, the experienced political players will not be seduced by this expediency and will stay true to a process that more properly airs the advocacy of a spectrum of views within the national security nexus, including those of the military. Unfortunately, experienced political players exist in ever decreasing numbers, leaving a panoply of inexperienced political players and some experienced players who are more interested in action than protocol. Such individuals are easily seduced, and each time they are the structure for policy formulation is weakened.

A leader who suppresses advice or shuts out the counsel of those legally mandated to provide advice risks not only the decision of the moment, but also the complete breakdown of an integrated process. From our historical examples, the two extremes in modern times would be President Johnson during Vietnam and President Bush during Desert Storm. It is always appropriate to offer contrary opinions, but it is perhaps even more important how that opinion is proffered and received.

Bypassing process can foment distrust if not complete dysfunction. This occurs frequently with regional commanders-in-chief (CINCs). While informal consultations between Assistant Secretaries of State and CINCs are normal and expected on regional issues, informal backdoor agreements without department-level or interagency consultation are not desirable, and can have far-reaching effects on the trust and confidence in the decision-making structure. In these cases especially, it is important to try to take the vast distances and differences in agency as well as international cultures into account when drawing conclusions about their interactions.

Selection of senior officials for top posts is another area that can have dramatic effect on the process. Even with the best choices of qualified people who work terrifically together, personalities can still come into play. The top team will set the tone for all relations below it, for better or worse, so the choice of top people is critical, though not sufficient, to a properly functioning process. When the choices are made well, the decision maker is served well by the process. One example of this came from an interview with a former Chairman who told of an instance where he and the Secretary of Defense went into the President in complete disagreement. The Secretary deliberately set up the opportunity for the Chairman to state his strong opposing view, which ultimately prevailed.<sup>31</sup> This type of positive interaction serves the nation very well and would not have been possible had there been a poor choice of Secretary of Defense.

When appointments are primarily the results of politics, not process, the likelihood of picking the right kind of person is randomized and dependent upon the prevalence of such candidates within the greater pool of candidates. This randomness plagued political and military senior appointments in the 1960s and led to a galaxy of advisors to fulfill the roles the statutory players could not perform. Since 1986 and the professional military education reforms generated by the Goldwater-Nichols Act, randomness has been significantly constrained within the military. For political appointees, if there has been any change at all, the trend has been toward greater randomness. Only the repeated use of people who form a small population of talented civilian players has consistently filled the bill. There is no structure for political appointees that ensures strength on the political side of political-military relations.

A structural area that needs attention is the lack of an active counterpart to the CINC at the regional level of the State Department. Washington is a “one-issue” town where leaders are

sometimes compelled to focus on one major issue at a time. Consequently, a CINC may often feel like the combination of SECDEF and SECSTATE on a day-to-day basis until a crisis erupts and sets the entire national security apparatus into motion, thus drawing in the Secretary of Defense.<sup>32</sup> Structure and process are adequate for today's issues and environment. Though it can always improve, ascendancy of best ideas seems satisfactory in the current process. Take for instance the case of military staffs creating draft policy papers for civilian agencies for consideration, adaptation, change or outright rejection based on merit. Weaknesses in need of reform are more obvious and pressing in the preparation and education of the political participants to constructively collaborate with the military on policies involving the use of force.

## **PERSONALITY MATTERS; OR PERSONALITIES MATTER**

When dealing in national security issues, past and present participants told us that interactions and positions should not be personalized. The frequency and consistency of that advice suggests a lesson repeatedly learned in the school of hard knocks. It also suggests that debate during policy formulation or policy implementation often does become personal, or at least personality affected. Indeed, most of the interviews suggest that both personality and organizational culture matter. While it is relatively easy to map out the political-military interface at the senior levels to suggest how it should work, the great variable that makes it different from NSC to NSC is the human factor.<sup>33</sup> A large part of that is personality. The extent to which personality dominates is more a function of an imbalance in other areas than a confirmation of personality's natural and proper role.

The problems and acrimony arising in the national security nexus are rarely solely attributable to a personality issue, but as we have discussed above, there are many levels of tensions built into the apparatus. Personality can thus quickly sharpen a dispute, or even disarm one.<sup>34</sup> A personality clash can enable or disable structured relationships in the process.<sup>35</sup> Excessive advocacy of positions, zealousness or agendas can have deleterious effects on policy debates, just as lack of character, integrity or candor can erode personal trust and mutual respect.

In the context of measuring tension as a means of determining functionality in the civil-military relationship, personality can be the determinant variable that modulates the tone of the debate to keep it within or drive it outside functional bounds. This emphasizes the importance of

the selection and promotion processes for placing key figures into the apparatus. It also suggests that personality traits matter. Experience can be determinant here. As one former CINC told us, the instincts developed after 30 or more years in the briar patch may be more important than the measurable things in determining when a relationship is falling into dysfunction.

It is difficult to see where the individual personalities end and organizational culture begins when examining personality conflicts at this level of discourse. One feeds the other and a pattern of personalities over time changes organizational culture,<sup>36</sup> which in turn shapes personalities. For the civil-military interface, this makes military culture the more consistent of the competing factions when compared to the large shifts in civilian personnel resulting from changes in partisan politics, which could quickly serve to widen any existing chasm. If both sides do not acknowledge and understand the value of this kind of diversity, it can and will have the kinds of consequences we all try to avoid. This is also another argument for the value of an apolitical military.

The future impact of organizational culture and personalities in the national security arena, then, is problematic on two fronts when the military culture has greater inertia. First, as we have stated, military officers tend to be averse to “gray” policy objectives, preferring black and white. Richard Holbrooke sees this as particularly problematic<sup>37</sup>, since the matters calling for military input are increasingly “gray” with no change in sight. Second, and along similar lines, military culture does not naturally breed senior officers who accept spirited debate well. Promotion and assignment processes may or may not reward that learned trait, depending on the wisdom of the body considering those issues. This characteristic is particularly troubling because we argue that spirited debate is crucial to forming effective policy and its absence especially worrisome as issues become more “gray” and require more rigorous debate. One highly experienced practitioner of national security policy formulation gave the clearest assessment of a solution to the problem. His assertion that we may be ambiguous in our options, but we must not be ambiguous in our objectives, seems to get right to the heart of the matter.

As with our assertion that lack of tension matters as much as too much tension, personality matters in how we conduct debate. In personal interactions, past practitioners have told us, diligent work behind the scenes and a “passion for anonymity” goes a long way to strengthening the national security process.<sup>38</sup> The key here is to have the dutiful involvement

behind the scenes, where participants offer appropriate counsel and voice disagreement as a matter of obligation. President Eisenhower had a guiding mantra that he would use to focus debate in meetings, asking, “what is in the *nation’s* best interest?”<sup>39</sup> Further encouraging rigorous participation was a sign in the room that read “No non-concurrence through silence.”<sup>40</sup> We think that is particularly cogent advice.

Personality matters, or perhaps more appropriately put: *personalities* matter.

## DEFAULT TO THE MILITARY OPTION

Ambassador Robert Oakley and a host of other experienced leaders believe there is an ingrained bureaucratic expectation that DOD is the most appropriate agency for solving many global problems.<sup>41</sup> Marine Commandant General C.C. Krulak articulates this phenomenon as automatic default in favor of the military option.<sup>42</sup> Oakley, Krulak, and others believe the issue is larger than the traditional turf battles over supported-supporting relationships that commonly occur in the executive branch. Rather, they believe it is about strategic options<sup>43</sup>—the practice of applying the right element of national power at the right time to the appropriate security challenge facing the US. As noted earlier in the paper, the necessity for using more than the military element of power is greater than ever before. Yet, the decision makers invariably select DOD as the agency of choice. Oakley and others think this must change.

Two examples illustrate this point. First, in both Somalia and Haiti, reforming and re-training the local indigenous police force emerged as a major nation-building issue. After the US armed forces achieved a modicum of stability in each nation, the essential issue became which US Government agency to task with rehabilitating Somali and Haitian law enforcement agencies.<sup>44</sup> Of course, many US policymakers looked to the Pentagon to dedicate military police to this undertaking.<sup>45</sup> The DOD view was that civilian law enforcement agencies—linked to international law enforcement groups under United Nations auspices—would better elicit the emergence of democratic institutions in developing nations. Although readily available, US military police were among the least appropriate tools to use. The military and DOD had to point this out.

A second example, given by a senior military officer with extensive experience in the interagency development of policy, relates to a Department of State requirement for utility vehicles to support observer operations in Kosovo. Rather than lease commercial utility vehicles, the State Department levied a requirement on the Pentagon to supply ten military High Mobility Multi-purpose Wheeled Vehicles, often referred to as "Hummers" and DOS contracted the maintenance support. After significant discussion at very senior levels, DOD provided the vehicles to the State Department, but without mechanics or a maintenance plan. Within six months, State was back pleading with DOD for logistics help and the process began again.

Oakley and others clearly recognize the frequent need for DOD to perform a supporting role. They do not deny that the military has achieved a reputation for getting the job done. In this sense, the Pentagon is a victim of its own success. At the same time, the Pentagon has the largest manpower pool and budget in the executive branch, attributes that are coveted by many other agencies in Washington. This notwithstanding, Oakley and others argue for a more level playing field between government agencies. The unspoken question seems to be, "Can policy makers rely on non-DOD agencies to execute the current national security strategy of engagement?"

The record seems to answer with a resounding "no." The consequences of failure have not fallen on the failed agencies. Thus far, even the reorganization of some of these agencies (examples include the Agency for International Development, the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, the United States Information Agency) under State Department supervision, if not control, has not manifested an improvement in planning or an ability to respond in a timely fashion to crises affecting the national security strategy. DOD is then left in a position to force the issue on one hand, putting the strategy of engagement at risk, or to anticipate and act upon requirements that should perhaps be performed by someone else but that will inevitably find a home on the steps of the Pentagon.

In short, automatic default to the military element of power will continue until major reforms occur in the Executive Branch processes. These are reforms that Oakley and Krulak hope will better "kluge the elements of national power" into an apparatus better equipped for responding to and shaping the security challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

An undeniable and rather extraordinary role reversal occurred between 1962 and 1992. Its manifestation is an entirely new set of dynamics in political-military relations that few have acknowledged and fewer have understood. In 1962, best illustrated in the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Joint Chiefs of Staff were notorious for suggesting substantive military action (much more than a naval blockade) to resolve the crisis at every succeeding step of the episode. The justification offered, and one echoed by congressional "hawks," was that *the Soviets would only understand military force*. Bernard Brodie characterizes this justification as a theme often heard at military staff and war colleges, and in military circles generally.<sup>46</sup> (Given his position as a faculty member at such an institution, we accept the veracity of his characterization.) The nation's most senior military officers were unable to look beyond the limited military field in forming their recommendations. President Kennedy was disturbed by this inability but reminded his brother to remember "that they were trained to fight and to wage war – that was their life. Perhaps we would feel even more concerned if they were always opposed to using arms or military means—for if they would not be willing who would be?" For the Kennedys and other key civilians, this experience pointed out the importance of civilian direction and control, and the importance of raising probing challenges to military recommendations.<sup>47</sup>

Consider the preceding episode in light of some recent national security episodes. Kennedy's greater concerns have been met. The military in the 1990s routinely offers alternatives other than the use of arms or military means and is often the source of most of the probing questions when such a course of action is proffered by politicians. The famous exchange between future Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman General Colin Powell is just one of many available examples. Perhaps more ominous is the current political rhetoric emerging from the national security arena, particularly from people who would certainly not have been labeled "hawks" in the 1960s, regarding Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic, who *only understands military force*. The roles have clearly reversed, and we foresee them remaining this way unless the political and military players are educated to perform them differently.

## TO BE WELL EDUCATED

Education in the present is the foundation of everything that happens in the future.

Honorable Ike Skelton<sup>48</sup>

In any discipline, mastery comes from a combination of innate ability, study, and practice. This applies as much to the affairs of the nation as it does to anything else. How, then, does the nation prepare masters for the formulation of policy and for its application through forceful means? A short excursion through history reveals that all too often the emphasis is on identification of the first aspect – innate ability. But deliberate development through study and practice is the best way to increase the chance of having masters in the national security arena.

Machiavelli was successful through his writings in convincing his contemporaries, and those who followed him for generations to come, that the sovereign had to know how to conduct war if the nation was to survive. He may rightly be credited with making the art of war a social science, the study of which applied to statesmen and generals. History has repeatedly proven Machiavelli right, but in reality, the study has been very inconsistent.

Among military professionals the study of national uses of force has taken on various forms and matured over time. Among civilians involved in making policies associated with the use of force, the study has been very random indeed. The situation America is in today concerning political-military relationships is highly influenced by these distinct developmental pathways. Examination of them will expose the way to advance the relationship in the future to avoid the mistakes of the past.

### Importance of Military Education

Soldiers usually are close students of tactics, but only rarely are they students of strategy and practically never of war! It is not their function, after all, to study history creatively or to concern themselves with the economic, social, and political costs of war.

Bernard Brodie, *War and Politics*

## Knowledge is Power

The Goldwater-Nichols Act ended the debate about the need for military reform, but, because of its strict provisions, new debates ensued about how to meet the requirements. The empowerment of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and concomitant alignment of the Joint Staff as the Chairman's staff have been addressed as to their impacts on national security policy formulation. Nevertheless, that was not the only area in which new provisions would significantly alter the national security calculus. Perhaps the most challenging of these provisions (and possibly the most significant intrusion by civilian policy makers into military policy) is the portion of the act embodied in Title IV—Joint Officer Personnel Policy.

Title IV directs the Secretary of Defense to establish a joint specialty for officers who are qualified in joint matters.<sup>49</sup> It also delineates the promotion rates for officers performing joint duty, the education required for an officer to perform joint duty, and joint tour lengths.<sup>50</sup>

Regarding education, the act directs the Secretary of Defense to revise and review the curriculum of Joint Military Education Schools and other professional military education programs to strengthen the education of officers in joint matters. It further requires the Secretary of Defense to take measures to improve the training and experience of officers serving in senior joint positions.<sup>51</sup> At the time of its passing, Title IV, though clear in direction, did not fully articulate what the military education system was to produce. Since that time, numerous panels, commissions, reports and studies have been undertaken to fill the original void.

On November 13, 1987, Representative Les Aspin (Democrat from Wisconsin's First District), Chairman of the House of Representatives Committee on Armed Services, appointed a panel to focus solely on the military education system in the wake of the Goldwater-Nichols Act. The Panel on Military Education became known as the Skelton Panel after its chairman, Representative Ike Skelton.<sup>52</sup>

The panel had a two-fold charter from the House Armed Services Committee. First, it was to review the Department of Defense plans for implementing the education provisions of the Goldwater-Nichols Act. Second, it was to address the ability of the Department of Defense military education system to encourage the development of exceptional military thinkers,

planners, and strategists.<sup>53</sup> Given this as its charter, the Skelton Panel becomes the basis for revealing the intent and direction of the legislation as well as the subsequent influences on political-military relations.

The Skelton panel conducted a series of hearings to meet the requirements of its charter. Submitting thirty-five recommendations to the Secretary of Defense, the panel shaped its recommendations to conform to the insights gained from World War II experiences. Of the thirty-five recommendations, four are key to this discussion of the impact of professional military education on political-military relations in the national security arena.

The first key recommendation of the Skelton Panel was the establishment of an educational framework that would cause each succeeding level of education to build upon the preceding level. This same framework would tie together the curricula at the joint and Service schools. The most important aspect of the framework is the emphasis on Joint Operational Art at the intermediate joint school, in many ways a logical progression to the work begun by the Secretary of War in the first quarter of the century. It is the framework currently in effect.

The second key recommendation provides a conceptual structure for developing a premier academic institution. A National Center for Strategic Studies would generate original military thought on strategy and educate students, faculty, and researchers who could then refine the concepts developed there.<sup>54</sup> The National Center for Strategic Studies *per se* does not exist, but the current structure and focus of the National Defense University clearly reflect the vision that conceived it. In reality, the only substantive difference between the proposed structure and the existing structure is the seniority of the students undergoing the year-long course. The addition of an Institute for National Security Studies to the already existing but modified National War College and Capstone Program has produced something that clearly meets the intent. The interagency focus of the National War College is evident in its mission statement<sup>55</sup> and in its student body composition, 75 percent of which is military (land, sea, and air services in equal proportion) and 25 percent of which comes from the Department of State and other federal departments and agencies. The State Department is a joint sponsor of the National War College.<sup>56</sup>

In its third key recommendation, the panel recommended a greater concentration on national military strategy in senior military education. The panel concluded that too much

emphasis was being placed on theater-level operations in all but the Navy's senior school, an observation linked to the shortcomings of the professional military education system prior to World War II. Since the National Center for Strategic Studies would provide the focus on national security strategy, and since the intermediate-level schools were providing increased emphasis on the operational-level of war, there would be less need for the senior-level schools to concentrate on either area.<sup>57</sup> All senior military education programs now emphasize both national military strategy and national security strategy.

The fourth key recommendation made by the panel addresses the necessity for academic rigor in professional military education, especially at the intermediate and senior levels. The panel focused on writing and evaluation as the essential elements of graduate-level education (this study itself is a manifestation of that recommendation).<sup>58</sup>

The Skelton Panel went into unusual depth in preparing its report. It translated the sketchy guidelines of the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986 into well-researched recommendations intended to improve professional military education in general and joint professional military education in particular. The findings of the panel, it is reasonable to conclude, made the greatest contribution of this century toward improving professional military education, and with it, equipped the military to collaborate constructively in the political-military relationship at the highest levels.

Goldwater-Nichols was an act of Congress that pushed the military forward exponentially. It clearly envisioned something that was an evolutionary step beyond the existing professional military education system, and it met with resistance as well as support within the military. In many ways, it mandated overdue reforms that the military could not seem to impose upon itself to move beyond the status quo. The payoff has been evident, and the investment increases in value with each succeeding application of military force in the Post Cold War era. Professional education is now well embedded in the culture of the professional military and is the key to military influence in the national security apparatus. Bernard Brodie's assessment of military professionals, despite its well-founded basis in a not too distant era, is now flatly wrong. Every military officer operating in the national security apparatus is not only a close student of tactics, but, unlike all but a few predecessors from the 1960s, also possesses a firm grasp of military and national security strategy. Military officers, especially the most senior ones, are no

longer amateurs at recognizing the economic, social, and political costs of that peculiar instrument of policy called war.

Can the same be said about the other hand on the sword? We contend that there is a conspicuous lack of a similar mandate for civilian development.

### **Brilliant Amateurs: Statesman and Diplomat Education Programs**

The new generation of officers is growing up in a different environment—well, somewhat different. Yet the civil hand must never relax, and it must without one hint of apology hold the control that has always belonged to it by right.<sup>59</sup>

Bernard Brodie, *War and Politics*

How well prepared are the civilian participants in the national security arena? What does “the bench” look like for the future? If the military is well prepared today to engage in national security dialogue, beyond simply the “how” of applying force, the average civilian appointee lags behind in study and experience in the political-military interface. Many career government civilians attend equivalent professional educational institutions such as the military War Colleges and the Foreign Service Institute. Unfortunately, the numbers are inadequate to keep pace with the military’s development, and the people sent are not always the “fast trackers” who will be involved in the future national security arena.<sup>60</sup> Moreover, this inadequate number does not even include political appointees who hold many of the influential positions at the deputy and principal levels.

The current State Department preference for brilliant amateurs has traditional roots in the selection of bright, young intellectuals and practitioners who brought a fresh perspective to the national security crises of their eras and who were driven by an opportunity to serve their country. As David Halberstam recorded in his highly acclaimed work, *The Best and the Brightest*, this era ended with Vietnam.

Added to the professional education differential is a dearth of civilians throughout the government who have any military experience—largely a lingering effect of the all-volunteer force. Ten years ago, roughly 80 per cent of the Congress had prior military experience. Today,

the inverse ratio exists—fewer than twenty per cent have served in the military.<sup>61</sup> Experience *in* the military is important, but experience *with* the military is far more important.

A personnel assignment policy within the State Department that does not place as much value on political-military assignments as the military does now on joint duty assignments exacerbates the problem of familiarity with the military element of power. A personnel system that struggles to identify the very best people for focused development compounds this problem.<sup>62</sup> Consequently, few of the senior State Department officials who operate within the interagency environment of the national security apparatus have had any interaction with the military at all. And, to a surprising degree, few have experience even with the State Department or the policy arena.<sup>63</sup> The mechanisms and incentives to prepare large numbers of civilian decision-makers through personal experience or interaction are significantly diminished.

To the detriment of the national security process, there is not a groundswell of support within the State Department to do anything about the shortfalls. Initiatives between the State Department's Foreign Service Institute and professional military education institutions (particularly the National Defense University and the Army War College) are receiving greater support from the military than from the State Department. Culturally, the State Department still focuses on producing top-notch “reporting officers.” The regional orientation and language preparation of these officers are unparalleled. But even a cursory glance at the courses offered to senior foreign service officer reveals an emphasis on leadership and management skills. Strategic policy formulation skills are conspicuously absent.<sup>64</sup>

This is not to say there are not highly talented people in the civilian ranks. Clearly there are. We are concerned with identifying a lagging, unique skill set that happens to have great import when needed, and is important as well to maintaining the balance in the political-military relationship. Obviously both sides of this relationship have a stake here, and both should work toward a solution. Time and resources (budget and personnel) are problematic, inasmuch as this lacks adequate priority to gain sufficient quantities of either for more of the right civilians to attend senior service schools or spend time in the political-military arena. The depth of understanding of the military by civilian decision-makers is near a critical low. This dearth of understanding leads to erosion of functional tension in the relationship, which can place us quickly and stealthily into a state of dysfunctional tension with disastrous consequences.

When comparing professional education levels and experiences of civilian and military leaders who meet at the pinnacle of political-military interaction, equal comparisons are difficult at best. Although several promising studies are in progress in this area, few have presented data as well as that by Gibson and Snider.<sup>65</sup> Gibson and Snider acknowledge that exceptional interpersonal skills are important to successful influence within these relationships, as with any high-stakes relationship. They go on to study the influence some might have over others by virtue of their educational background and experience. They developed a coding system for education by type of degree or program. A more elaborate coding structure represented experience based on proximity to national security matters and type of involvement. Greater credit was amassed within coding fields for wartime service in the same field, and still greater credit garnered for decorated wartime service.<sup>66</sup>

The analysis of data conducted by Gibson and Snider yielded several findings, among them:

...(Because) of increased educational levels, and both more emphasis on jointness and having top quality younger officers serving in politically sensitive jobs earlier in their careers . . . , the military has dramatically improved its ability to operate at the higher political-military levels of government.<sup>67</sup>

...overall civilian political-military experience has not witnessed a significant decline since the 1960s. However ... in the latest time period (1993-1995) there was, at levels II and III (Civilian Secretaries and Service Chiefs, and Under Secretary and Joint Staff interface), a noticeable decline in the potential influence of civilian leaders.<sup>68</sup>

...analysis of the educational and assignment history indicators demonstrates a shift in the balance of potential influence within the political-military network over the three time periods studied. This shift may partially explain the increase in civil-military tensions in the post-Cold War.<sup>69</sup>

...the structural changes brought on by the Goldwater-Nichols Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 affected both process and product and accelerated the trend of increased military expertise in the political-military realm.<sup>70</sup>

These same conclusions were common threads throughout our interviews with senior decision-makers. Our conclusion: the civilian side needs help to bolster its development system. Help is coming already from the military. Now the civilians must help themselves as well. Our

emphasis on the State Department stems from the recognition that it is the principal partner for the Defense Department in the national security arena.<sup>71</sup> As such, constructive collaboration with State is the most important step to producing well-integrated national security policy. The old State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee of the late 1940s, precursor to the National Security Council Staff, bears testimony to this. When one of the partners is not up to the task, policy suffers or surrogates step in to fill the void. At the close of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the weak partner is the State Department. Change is unlikely unless an act of Congress, similar to the Goldwater-Nichols Act for the military, forces the State Department, the key civilian institution in the political-military arena, to overcome its own internal, cultural resistance to change.

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*Part IV endnotes*

<sup>1</sup> Major General Mike McCarthy, USAF, personal interview, 09 December 1998.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Jock Covey, personal interview, 08 December 1998.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Richard Kohn, telephone interview, 21 January 1999.

<sup>4</sup> General Goodpaster, USA (Ret), personal interview, 14 January 1999.

<sup>5</sup> Covey interview.

<sup>6</sup> Covey interview.

<sup>7</sup> Lieutenant General J.L. Jones, USMC, personal interview, 09 December 1998.

<sup>8</sup> Dr. John White, personal interview, 14 December 1998.

<sup>9</sup> Covey interview.

<sup>10</sup> Covey interview.

<sup>11</sup> Lieutenant General Brent Scowcroft, USAF (Ret), personal interview, 16 December 1998.

<sup>12</sup> General Charles C. Krulak, USMC, personal interview, 08 December 1998.

<sup>13</sup> White interview.

<sup>14</sup> White interview.

<sup>15</sup> Covey interview.

<sup>16</sup> Scowcroft interview.

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<sup>17</sup> General Carl Vuono, USA (Ret), personal interview, 26 November 1998.

<sup>18</sup> Kohn interview.

<sup>19</sup> Kohn interview.

<sup>20</sup> Amos A. Jordan, William J. Taylor, Jr., and Lawrence J. Korb, *American National Security: Policy and Process*, Fourth edition, 1993, p. 185.

<sup>21</sup> Goodpaster interview.

<sup>22</sup> Ambassador Thomas Pickering, telephone interview, 20 February 1999.

<sup>23</sup> Scowcroft interview.

<sup>24</sup> Meets daily at 0700; includes Secretary, Deputy Secretary, Chairman and Vice Chairman.

<sup>25</sup> Meets daily at 0900; includes the Under Secretaries, Service Secretaries, public affairs, legislative affairs and other organizations within DOD; purely a civilian gathering of 18-20 individuals.

<sup>26</sup> Generally speaking, the more complex the issue, the smaller the group; thus the term "Small Group Meeting" for items of great complexity in meeting with the President.

<sup>27</sup> Senior officials, both past and present at the Deputies and Principals level, praised the effectiveness of these groups in drawing out the issues and concerns from all corners. They also suggested the IWG or Deputies level could do more to prepare issues for further consideration, or even handle problems at a lower level.

<sup>28</sup> Mr. Jock Covey of the NSC stated this with emphasis in our 8 December 1998 interview.

<sup>29</sup> This theme was common across all groups—diplomats, military, civilian leaders—in our interviews.

<sup>30</sup> Scowcroft interview.

<sup>31</sup> General Colin Powell, USA (Ret), personal interview, 20 November 1998. General Powell related how Secretary Cheney told the President we must bomb Bosnia, and anyone who would tell you otherwise was either lying or a fool ... "but Colin will tell you otherwise." This demonstrates both the importance of vetting all ideas (especially controversial ones), and rising above making the process personal. This can only happen routinely where there is mutual respect. Looking back at this particular dialog with the benefit of history is particularly enlightening on the value of process.

<sup>32</sup> Comment by former CINCs.

<sup>33</sup> Emphasized in personal interviews with LTG Jones and Ambassador Pickering.

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<sup>34</sup> Covey interview.

<sup>35</sup> General Ron Fogelman, USAF (Ret), personal interview, 12 February 1999.

<sup>36</sup> Covey interview.

<sup>37</sup> Ambassador Richard Holbrooke, personal interview, 13 January 1999.

<sup>38</sup> This theme was repeated frequently, especially by the most experienced people we interviewed. The phrase "passion for anonymity" is taken directly from the words succinctly put by General Goodpaster.

<sup>39</sup> Research interview with General Goodpaster, USA (Ret), who was President Eisenhower's chief of staff.

<sup>40</sup> Goodpaster interview.

<sup>41</sup> Ambassador Robert Oakley, personal interview, 08 December 1998.

<sup>42</sup> Krulak interview.

<sup>43</sup> This was not a unanimous conclusion, but was a widely held view. At least two of our interviewees attributed this to the civilians being cowed by the military.

<sup>44</sup> Oakley Interview.

<sup>45</sup> Ambassador Robert Gelbard, personal interview, 19 February 1999.

<sup>46</sup> Brodie, p. 488. Brodie quotes Robert F. Kennedy's recollection of the crisis.

<sup>47</sup> Brodie, p. 489. Quotation is attributed to Robert F. Kennedy.

<sup>48</sup> US Congress, Representative Ike Skelton speaking on "Military Strategy, Unfocused, Unstudied, Unlearned", *Congressional Record - House*, 100th Cong., 1st sess., Oct 6, 1987, Vol. 133, No.155, H8235.

<sup>49</sup> The act defined joint matters as those matters relating to the integrated employment of land, sea and air forces, including matters relating to national military strategy, strategic planning and contingency planning, and command and control of combat operations under unified command. Taken from US Congress, "Conference Report, House of Representatives, Sep 12, 1986, *Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986*, 99th Congress, 2d Session, Report #99-824, (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office), Sec. 668. Hereafter referred to as *Goldwater-Nichols Act*. West, "Goldwater-Nichols -- A Primer", p. 16.

<sup>50</sup> *Goldwater-Nichols Act*, Secs. 662, 663, 664.

<sup>51</sup> *Goldwater-Nichols Act*, Sec. 663.

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<sup>52</sup>Panel membership included Rep. Ike Skelton (D-Mo.) as chairman, Rep. Jack Davis (R-Il.) as ranking minority member, and Reps. Solomon Ortiz (D-Tex.), George (Buddy) Darden (D-Ga.), Joseph E. Brennan (D-Maine), Owen B. Pickett (D-Va.), John G. Rowland (R-Conn.), and Jon Kyl (R-Ariz.) as remaining members. From US Congress, *Report of the Panel On Military Education of the One Hundredth Congress of the Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives*, Representative Ike Skelton, Chairman, April 21, 1989, 101st Congress, 1st Session, (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office), p. v. Hereafter referred to as *Skelton Panel Report*. Congressional Yellow Book, Jodie Scheiber, Ed., Vol. XVI, No. 4 (New York: Monitor Publishing Co., Nov 1990), p. II-236.

<sup>53</sup>US Congress, Representative Ike Skelton speaking on "The House Armed Services Committee Panel on Military Education: Focusing the Spotlight", *Congressional Record - House*, 100th Cong., 1st sess., Nov 19, 1987, Vol. 133, No. 186, H10648. *Skelton Panel Report*, p. v.

<sup>54</sup>The panel envisioned a center, which comprised four institutions. First it would have a year-long school with approximately 50 students of senior rank (defined as Colonel/Captain (Navy) through Major General/Rear Admiral) who are all graduates of a senior-level Professional Military Education school and who could potentially serve in senior intergovernmental or multinational security assignments. Second, it would have an institute for original thought on national security strategy and national military strategy. This institute would serve as a think tank to attract scholars, government officials, and senior military leaders. Third, it would have a capstone institute for general/flag officer education. Finally, it would serve as an institute for holding seminars, symposia, and workshops in strategy for the public and private sectors alike. *Skelton Panel Report*, p. 5, pp. 116 - 117.

<sup>55</sup> "NWC's mission is to prepare future leaders of the Armed Forces, State Department, and other civilian agencies for high-level policy, command, and staff responsibilities by conducting a senior-level course of study in national security strategy and national security policy process." Taken from the National War College Home Page. Available <http://www.ndu.edu/nud/nwc/nwchp.html> 5 April 1999.

<sup>56</sup> NWC Home Page, p. 1.

<sup>57</sup>The panel based a part of this recommendation on the assumption that there would be graduates of "adequate operational art programs" who would eventually matriculate at the senior level and would already be versed in operational art. *Skelton Panel Report*, pp. 5 - 6.

<sup>58</sup>*Skelton Panel Report*, p. 7, pp. 161 - 166.

<sup>59</sup> Brodie, p. 496.

<sup>60</sup> Interviews revealed a concern that such schools too often were rewards to staff workers (in both DOD and State) rather than development opportunities for "rising stars."

<sup>61</sup> Representative Paul McHale (D-PA), personal interview, 13 November 1998.

<sup>62</sup> This is based on interviews with senior civilians, not on scientific or academic study.

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<sup>63</sup> Taken from an analysis of biographies for the principal officers of the State Department (Assistant Secretaries, Special Envoys, Under Secretaries, and the Secretary and Deputy Secretary).

<sup>64</sup> This conclusion is drawn from several of the interviews with past and present State Department officials, and a review of the description of courses offered by the Leadership and Management Development Division of the Foreign Service Institute.

<sup>65</sup> Christopher P. Gibson, and Don M. Snider, *Explaining Post-Cold War Civil-Military Relations: A New Institutional Approach*, Project on U.S. Post cold-War Civil-Military Relations Working Paper No. 8, January 1997. Other studies are underway at the Triangle Institute, but data is unavailable. Verbal explanation of the study by some of its proponents at the Civil-Military Relations Conference in Newport, 11-12 March 1999 indicated their findings would largely corroborate Gibson and Snider, although those remarks preceded actual presentation of the complete data.

<sup>66</sup> Gibson and Snider, pp. 31-34.

<sup>67</sup> Gibson and Snider, p. 40.

<sup>68</sup> Gibson and Snider, p. 44.

<sup>69</sup> Gibson and Snider, p. 45.

<sup>70</sup> Gibson and Snider, p. 47.

<sup>71</sup> The bases of this assessment are the State Department mission statement, the regular acceptance of this by other players who interact with State in interagency forums, and the traditional, as well as structural, linkages between the two since 1938 and the forming of the Standing Liaison Committee.

## Part V. Conclusions

The state of political-military relations in America is not in crisis and civilians are not in danger of losing control of the military hand on the nation's sword. Trends and patterns are clear, though, in indicating a poor prognosis for future national security policies without an improvement in the approach. We conclude that when formulating national security policy involving the use of force—both deciding to use force as an instrument of power, as well as tailoring military means to achieve diplomatic objectives—senior civilian and military leaders should engage in *constructive collaboration*. In our view, shown by our model, policy formulation and policy implementation exist in perpendicular dimensions. Expectations and misperceptions pull the civilian and military participants away from one another and impede their ability to cooperate in the same dimension. External forces such as social, political, cultural, and moral-ethical pressures constrain the relationship in both dimensions. Constructive collaboration overcomes these negative effects and creates conditions that support sound policy formulation and implementation.

While constructive collaboration does not preordain success, it does ensure policy formulation is inclusive rather than exclusive. The chances of success increase dramatically when the participants are both competent and well prepared, since constructive collaboration produces well-founded policy through the dominance of intellectual diversity over bureaucratic myopia. Constructive collaboration does not just happen. Like the participants who will engage in it, it must be developed. This must occur primarily in the policy formulation dimension. Once decisions are made, and the relationship enters the more traditional senior-subordinate dimension of implementation, constructive dialogue must clearly continue to keep means aligned with ends.

From the theoretical underpinnings, rules, and laws applicable to the national security arena we found no reason to reinvent the wheel. Rather, we see a need to make fuller use of what already exists. We observed a distinct role reversal in advocacy for the use of force in the political-military relationship. This interesting phenomenon derives from the military's adoption of a broader viewing lens for national security matters while civilian leadership has clung to a consistent, but dated, view. The civilian view tends to be wedded to perspectives of the past that

tend to create the potential for imbalance in the relationship favoring military influence. Clearly, both civilian and military leaders must have a broad view that encompasses all elements of national power. The lenses through which these views are obtained are appropriately distinct.

The Goldwater-Nichols Act forever changed the quality of military contributions to the national security arena. No such effort to improve the quality of civilian contributions exists, particularly within the State Department—the only other player in the arena with a career development and personnel management structure. It is not enough, then, simply to have two hands wielding the Nation's sword. For the two hands to achieve a dynamic balance produced by normal tension, a constructive collaboration of ideas, and an intentional development of the participants, are needed to keep up with the demands of an ever-changing, and increasingly complex, national security environment. Development must yield a common frame of reference (not necessarily a common experience) to keep the tension within functional bounds. In addition, development must apply to civilian and military leaders alike; to cause an appropriate competition of ideas from informed perspectives. This will more regularly yield appropriate control of the two hands wielding the nation's sword.

We conclude that the primary issue at play in the dynamic and sometimes volatile political-military interface is one of influence, not control. Influence comes from the roles of the participants themselves and their ability to contribute constructively to the policy formulation process. The ability to contribute is a function of process, preparation, and personality. These areas must receive focused attention if political-military relations are to drive the national security process positively. The process is sound, and can be effective in *ad hoc* as well as structured approaches taken by changing administrations. Preparation of the statutory participants ensures this, even as personality remains a wild card.

The perception of excessive military influence derives primarily from the vast improvements in the military when juxtaposed against the reduced national security policy experience, particularly in policies involving the use of force, of most civilian policy-makers. The prospect of the military being the single hand on the nation's sword, through acquiescence or atrophy on the part of political leaders, is an unacceptable one. Restoring a two-handed grip must not come from retrogression in military professionalism, but rather through a progression in

civilian professionalism. Constructive collaboration among players in the national security arena works, but only when influence is matched by preparation.

## Appendix 1. Tools for Practitioners

The following lists are for use by participants in the national security policy arena and for those who would aspire to participate in the future. They are distillations of the research, particularly from the personal interviews with past and present practitioners. The simplistic format in no way implies a simple solution to a very complex corpus of interactions. Nor do the authors imply that prescriptive lists solve problems. Nevertheless, it is provided with the intent of being a useful reminder for those practitioners who have already considered the items in the lists and perhaps as a recommendation to those who have not.

### **CIVILIAN PRACTITIONERS**

- Study your craft and be better at it than the military is at theirs.
- Recognize, value, and use to your advantage the extensive education of military officers in strategy and policy.
- Seek and accept a relationship with the military officers you work with. They are eager to know you. Most issues get resolved through personal interaction.
- Never fear for a moment that the military does not want civilian control.
- Expect senior military officers to express their opinions in any area that might influence their planned use. Then listen to them.
- Call the question if something doesn't sound right. Engage constructively. The more you understand about the military, the better you will be able to do this.

### **MILITARY PRACTITIONERS**

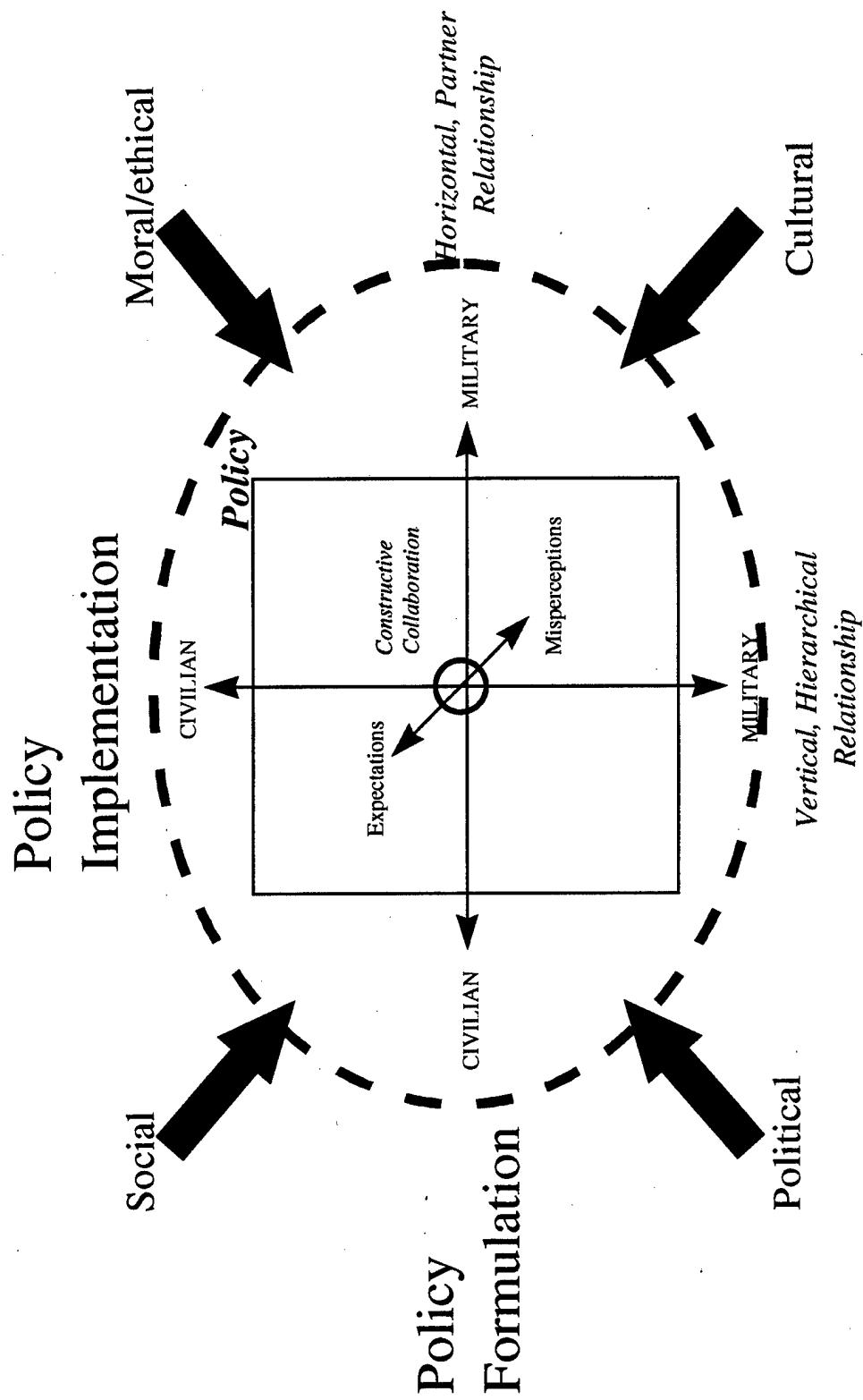
- Be honest with civilians. Credibility is your key.
- Form relationships before you need them.
- Educate others, especially your civilian colleagues, to understand what you understand.
- Don't ever forget that you are a warrior.

- Engage constructively. If something is wrong, say so. If you can make it better, speak up. No non-concurrence through silence!
- Continue to pass on to successive generations the ethic of subordination to civilian control. The Republic depends on it.
- Recognize the intentionally diverse and politically charged nature of the environment you are operating in.
- Let the politicians make and defend political decisions. It's their job.
- Candor (in policy formulation) must never be used as a means to defy or subvert direct orders; or as an excuse for disrespectful behavior.
- There is a fundamental and critical difference between candidly expressing one's views and using government resources to try to implement them.

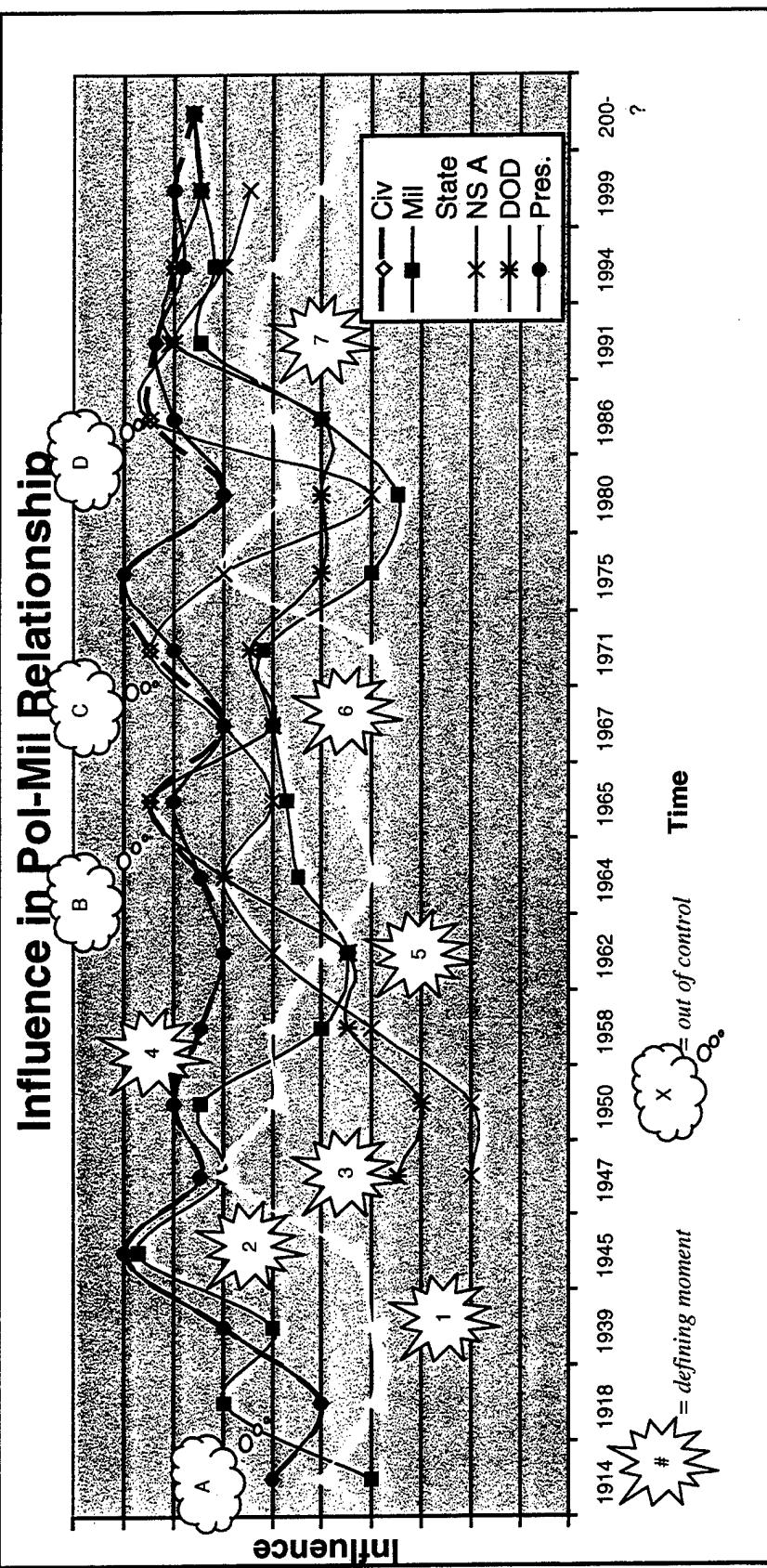
#### **DEPARTMENT OF STATE**

- Get organized and get in the game. If you don't play your hand, someone else in Washington can and will.
- Build a bench of talent from which to select Assistant Secretaries, Pol-Mil Directors, Deputy Secretaries, Secretaries, UN Ambassadors and Special Envoys. If you aren't ready, academe and business will continue to replace you.
- Invest in professional development. It's in the Department's, and in the Nation's interest. Cast off the view that you cannot afford to. You cannot afford not to.
- The best ideas will originate in Foggy Bottom only if you make it so.
- Put quality people in as Political Advisors (POLAD) to the regional CINCs. They can use good advice that you can live with.
- Increase the opportunities to interact with DOD and the services, and they with you. More is better in this area.
- Collaborate constructively. Get to know the players in something other than a confrontation.

## Appendix 2. Dynamic Interaction Model



### Appendix 3. Relative Influence



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